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THE FAITH OF A MODERN CHURCHMAN

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THE FAITH OF A MODERN CHURCHMAN

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CANON OF ELY

FORMERLY HEADMASTER OF CLIFTON COLLEGE; AUTHOR OF "THE END OF THE LAW," "STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF ISAIAH," ETC.

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"By a Modernist, I mean a Churchman, of any sort, who believes in the possibility of a synthesis between the essential truth of his religion and the essential truth of modernity."—GEORGE TYRRELL.

FOREWORD

A LARGE body of readers, educated and thoughtful men and women, lacking the opportunity for theological research, desire clear and brief statements of various aspects of Christian truth, as it appears in the light of modern knowledge. For they feel that their faith must find expression in terms of modern thought before it can be adequately translated into action. It is for such readers that the *Modern Churchman's Library* is intended. The writers of these volumes will all be practising members of the Church of England, who accept the main results of recent criticism, whether scientific, historical, or literary. Trained scholars and thinkers, they do not undervalue tradition: but above all they are truth-seekers and desire to be truth-speakers.

HENRY D. A. MAJOR.

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PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

Various critics, friendly and otherwise, pointed out mistakes and omissions in the first edition of this little book. The call for a second edition gives me the opportunity of remedying both defects. I have corrected those statements which appeared to me to be real mistakes, though those upon which the main attack was made still remain. The chief omission which was noticed was the lack of a chapter on sin. The subject is so difficult, especially when space is limited, that I had shrunk from writing what must be a very inadequate account. What I have now written is too long in proportion to the rest of the book, and yet too short to be at all complete. The plan of it is due to the belief that for young people who are not philosophers the best way of approaching the question of sin is to follow the path traced by the experience of mankind. Some other chapters have been partially rewritten, notably those on the divine nature and the resurrection.

M. G. GLAZEBROOK.

Nov. 1st, 1925.

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

It has been thought well that the first volume of the *Modern Churchman's Library* should be of the nature of a general statement, which might serve as an introduction to the other volumes, and indicate the relation between the subjects with which they are to deal. In theology, as in other spheres of thought, there is a danger of not seeing the wood for the trees. The author's first aim, therefore, has been to present something like a connected view of Church doctrine, as seen from the modern standpoint. There is much need for such an attempt. Thousands of thoughtful young men and women, sincerely religious, anxious for guidance about the great questions, turn away disappointed from the conventional answers of writers whose language and modes of thought seem to them obsolete, and look for some one who will speak in terms of the present day. Their demand, so natural, so just, so full of hope for the future of Church and State, seems a sufficient reason for offering a frankly modern statement of Christian truth as it is conceived by a large and ever increasing number of Churchmen.

The general aim of this little book will account for its limitations. Written primarily for those who have no training in philosophy, it does not discuss the metaphysical basis upon which all higher religions rest. Intended to answer a definite call, it emphasises the "live" questions which are actually debated in the counting-house and the trenches, and passes lightly over some others, which must claim a place in any systematic treatise. It avoids, as far as the author's training permits, the use of technical or conventional phrases, even when their absence is likely to be criticised. Brevity and charity alike have required an abstinence from controversy. As a rule, a plain statement of one view has been given, and some of the reasons, logical or historical, for holding it; but no attempt is made to refute rival opinions.

Conscious that he cannot divest himself of a representative character, the author has written with a strong sense of duty to the members of the Churchmen's Union. At the same time he does not claim that they would all agree with him on all points. He hopes that his general attitude is what they approve; but for each particular statement the responsibility is his own.

M. G. GLAZEBROOK.

The College, Ely,
Nov. 1st, 1917.

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THE FAITH OF A MODERN CHURCHMAN

CHAPTER I

THE DIVINE NATURE

Each of the world's prophets has conveyed a twofold message to his own people, and through them to mankind. He had some truth, whether new or revived, to teach about the nature of God, and some new aspect of duty to present for men's observance. It is no accident that combines the two parts of the prophet's message. They are indissolubly bound together; for what any man believes about God must, sooner or later, determine the standard of conduct which he acknowledges for himself. Therefore the humblest account of the Christian faith must begin with a chapter on the doctrine of God: not, indeed, on the whole of that doctrine, but on such parts of it as distinguish Christianity from all other religions. In one respect that is unfortunate; for no serious treatment of the greatest of all themes can fail to be difficult. But the reader who is not discouraged by this chapter will find the rest of the book easy.

A religious man who examines his own experience will find, in general, that at different times he is conscious of God in three different ways. Sometimes he contemplates the world of nature and of man as a great orderly system, whose Creator and Ruler stands apart from it, looking down, as it were, upon His creatures from above. At other times he is impressed rather by the living charm, the spontaneous loveliness, the almost personal appeal, of nature animate and inanimate. In such moments he says to himself, like Jacob, "Surely God is in this place"; or, like Goethe, he cries out that visible nature is the garment of the indwelling God. Yet again, he remembers occasions when in the depths of his own soul he felt an impulse or heard a silent voice, which was not his own, directing, comforting, or uplifting. When he tries to explain what has happened, he can find no better words than "The voice of God came to me," or "The Spirit of God moved me."

Reflecting thus, we become aware that the soul may set forth on three different paths, as it were, to seek for God, and in all three find a vision of Him, but not the same vision. These visions, or conceptions, are not peculiar to the Christian. He shares each of them with multitudes of other men in all ages. What is peculiar to him is the power, given by his faith, to hold all three conceptions, to see all three visions, at once, and to combine them in one, just as the man with two eyes combines into one "solid" picture the two flat images which two one-

eyed men would see if they stood in his place. The bearing of that comparison will be made clearer by a brief reference to two of the earlier religions.

The prophecy of Deutero-Isaiah,[1] in which we see the culmination of Hebrew religious thought, presents Jehovah as the Creator who formed the earth and the heavens out of chaos, the Ruler who directs the course of human history, yet far removed from the world, dwelling in mysterious majesty above the blue vault of the sky, invisible, ineffable. This mode of thought is commonly described by saying that the Hebrews conceived of God as transcendent.

The Greeks, on the other hand, saw God in nature all around them. Their plastic imagination peopled the world with divinities. The streams and the trees had their Naiads and Dryads; earth and sea and sky were at once pervaded and personified by greater gods; even the arts and the passions of men were ranged under patron deities. Gradually, taught by their philosophers, the more thoughtful learned to conceive God as one, but still they thought of Him as indwelling in Nature. The Stoics, the most influential philosophical sect in the first century, believed that God was a spirit pervading the world, manifest in all forms of life, and especially in the life of man; so that man was essentially one with God, and God was almost indistinguishable from Nature. All these modes of thought may be summed up by

[1] The author of Isa. xl.–lv.

saying that the Greeks conceived of God as immanent.[1]

The Christian revelation, as well as our own experience, affirms that each of these two conceptions presents an essential view of the truth But each is only one aspect, not the whole; and each is needed to complete the other. In a word, God is at once transcendent and immanent. Even before the Christian era men began to feel their way towards this larger truth.

While Egypt was ruled by the Ptolemies (323 to 47 B.C.) Alexandria became the chief university of the Greek-speaking world, where the representatives of all religions and all philosophies could meet and interchange their ideas. Here dwelt a vast number of Jews, some of whom, moved by the spirit of the place, tried to enrich their own doctrine of God by grafting upon it the Greek doctrine of immanence. In the so-called "Wisdom Literature," written in the third and second centuries before Christ, we find the Wisdom of God (*σοφία*) presented sometimes as a divine attribute which creates and pervades the world, sometimes as an actual divine person. After the middle of the second century another term began to take the place of Wisdom. The Word or Reason of God (*λόγος*) under Stoic influence, gradually became the accepted name for this great new conception.

The nature of the conception will be made clear by three short passages, which are fair samples. The first dates from the middle of the third century:—

[1] *i.e.*, indwelling in the world.

"The Lord formed me as the beginning of his way,
the first of his works of old.
I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning,
or ever the earth was . . .
When he made firm the skies above:
when the fountains of the deep became strong:
When he gave to the sea its bound,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth:
Then I was by him, as a master workman:
and I had delight continually,
Rejoicing always before him;
rejoicing in his habitable earth;
And my delight was with the sons of men."

PROVERBS viii. 22–31.

The second was composed about 200 B.C.

"I came forth from the mouth of the Most High,
and covered the earth as a mist.
I dwelt in high places,
and my throne was in the pillar of the cloud.
Alone I compassed the circuit of heaven
and walked in the depth of the abyss."

ECCLESIASTICUS xxiv. 4, 5.

The third was written about 100 B.C.

"She[1] is a breath of the power of God
and a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty;
Therefore can nothing defiled find entrance into her,
for she is an effulgence from everlasting light,

[1] Both in Hebrew and in Greek the word Wisdom is feminine.

And an unspotted mirror of the working of God,
and an image of his goodness.
And she, being one, hath power to do all things;
and remaining in herself reneweth all things.
And from generation to generation, passing into
holy souls,
she maketh men friends of God and prophets."
WISDOM vii. 25–27.[1]

Wavering and indefinite though their language is, these Alexandrian Jews were preparing men's minds to receive a truth which must otherwise have been unintelligible. It is due to their long efforts to reconcile transcendence with immanence that St. John's wonder-working phrase, "The Word was made flesh," could be accepted, and recognised as the key to the mystery of the Incarnation. But the preface to the Fourth Gospel, like other prefaces, was written last; and the great new thought which it suggests is not worked out in the body of the Gospel. Slowly and reverently developed by the Greek Fathers, and by their spiritual heirs in later ages, it has grown into a conception of the Incarnation which harmonises with the best thought of our age. This may be briefly stated as follows:—

God is not only "the high and lofty One that

[1] Compare Hebrews i. 2, 3. "His Son, through whom also he made the worlds: who, being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power," etc. The writer plainly identifies the Son with the Wisdom of God, borrowing the language of the Book of Wisdom.

inhabiteth eternity."[1] He is also the Eternal Reason, the creative and indwelling Wisdom, which pervades and orders the universe. Thus regarded, He is seen not to stand apart from His creatures, but to dwell with them and in them. Nature, animate and inanimate, is His revelation of Himself ; and in her noblest parts He is imaged most clearly. Noblest of all is man, endowed with the divine attributes of reason and love. In every man there is a spark of this divine life, though too often it is obscured or extinguished by sin. But in One Man there dwells, now and for ever, "the fullness of the Godhead bodily."[2] Other men are, so to speak, "words" of God; Jesus Christ is "the Word." He is at once the type and perfection of manhood—the Son of man ; and also the Son of God—the immanent Godhead manifest in the flesh.

Both Hebrews and Greeks believed in what we call inspiration ; and described it by saying that the breath[3] of God came upon a man and gave him knowledge or power. The Israelites recognised the influence of the Spirit alike in the heroic deeds of Gideon[4] or Samson,[5] in the artistic skill of Bezaleel,[6] and in the prophetic

[1] Isa. lvii. 15.

[2] Col. ii. 9.

[3] Both the Hebrew רוח and the Greek πνεῦμα mean equally "breath" and "wind." So there is often a difficulty in translating. See, for instance, St John iii. 8.

[4] Judges vi. 38. "The Spirit of Jehovah clothed itself with Gideon."

[5] Judges xiv. 6.

[6] Exod. xxxi. 1–5.

gifts of Isaiah. The Greeks, in like manner, used the word spirit to describe the power which prompted the poet, the artist, and the pythoness. More often, however, they preferred the word daemon (*δαίμων*), which we may render "*a* spirit." It was through such a daemon that Socrates claimed to receive the Divine guidance. Crude as the beliefs of both nations were, and liable to abuse in the interest of superstition, they contained the germs of a true faith. They make it easier for Christians to realise that, in some mysterious way, the Spirit of God, as St Paul teaches, may strengthen and inform the spirit of man. And they prove to us that the yearning which we feel for a breath of the Divine upon our souls is common to us with a large part of humanity; so that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit answers to a real and widely felt human need.

By two distinct paths, that of personal experience and that of human history, we have arrived at the same point, where we come face to face with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. We have seen how each element of the doctrine satisfies a craving of the human spirit; and how the union of those elements in one, by a harmonising paradox, meets the demands of the intellect. God reveals Himself to us, it has been well said, as Father, as Brother, and as an ideal self. Thankful for each of these aspects of Divine love, the Christian's instinct assures him that they are all essentially One. As the bodily eyes combine two views of an object into a

single impression, so the eyes of our faith portray to the soul "One God in Trinity." But when we try to explain and to define our mysterious assurance, the difficulties are many and great. Some of them are very real; for who can suppose that finite thought can fully comprehend the Infinite? Any conception of the Godhead which lacks the element of mystery thereby stands convicted of shallowness. Yet the most obvious of the difficulties is in a large measure artificial, being due to a misapprehension, fostered by familiarity with the Athanasian Creed, as to the actual teaching of the Church. The source of the error is the unqualified application of the term "person" to the Godhead, when, for instance, the Trinity is described as "Three Persons in One God." A little explanation will make this point clear.

The Latin word *persona* meant originally an actor's mask, and then came to be used for the character in the play which the wearer of the mask represented. It was first employed by Tertullian to translate the untranslatable word "hypostasis" by which Greek theologians denoted the three constituents of the Divine Trinity: and it was gradually, but hesitatingly, adopted by the other Latin theologians. What it meant for them is perhaps best shown by some of the illustrations by which St Augustine tries to explain the relations between the persons of the Holy Trinity. Man's being, which is a single unity, he reminds us, contains the three elements

of Memory, Intelligence, and Will, which are in a sense different and independent. Elsewhere he says that it contains Being, Thought, and Will; and again, Memory, Intelligence, Love. These three present different faces to the world, and yet each is an expression of the whole man. That is a conception which has gained a wider meaning from modern psychology.

But St Augustine was also the author of the treatise *De Trinitate* from which almost all the phrases in the Athanasian Creed were taken. There he shows the influence of the Greek term, which means something approaching to the word "substance," and so implies an almost complete distinction between the three "persons." So he represents the two views between which the Church has ever been oscillating, which in their extreme forms are called modalism and tritheism.

One cause which has generally brought down the scale on the side of tritheism is a change in the meaning of the word "person," which took place gradually. It came to be applied to men, and in time to be greatly valued by them. Personality became a title of dignity, expressing what was of most importance in a man. Now, if we analyse our notion of human personality, we shall see that it involves two elements. On the one hand, will, thought, and feeling are essential to personality: and they are elements which do not divide one from another, but tend to unite. On the other hand, each man is an individual, that is, he is separated from all others by differences of quality, and by limitations of time and

space, power and memory. Generally it is these latter elements which are most present to our minds. We seem to know ourselves by the differences which distinguish us from others, enclosing us, like so many walls, and shutting us off from the rest of our kind.

Now, in so far as personality implies limitations and negations, it is singularly inappropriate as a description of the Infinite and Eternal, Who is "above all, and through all, and in all." But a very little reflection may convince us that the essence of our personality is not negative, but positive—not that which separates, but that which unites; not limits of time and place, but will, thought and feeling. We have merely to consider the accepted ideas of a future life in order to assure ourselves of that truth.

If that be so, we need feel no hesitation in applying the term "person" to God. For, widely as theologians and philosophers differ in their views of the divine nature, all of them include in it the attributes of will and thought, an increasing majority that of feeling also. If it be true that God wills and thinks and feels, in however exalted a sense, the attribute of personality, which man offers to Him as the most precious treasure he possesses, is an appropriate and an acceptable tribute. Only in so far as God is personal can we have those personal relations with him which are implied in our prayers, in our conception of providence, and in our sense of duty. These elements of our religion are so universal and so deeply rooted in our nature

that they constitute strong proof of that divine personality which alone can give them a meaning. Yet the early Fathers, and those who follow them, hesitated to say "God is a person," because in a somewhat different sense they were wont to say "God is three persons." They compromised by saying God is not a person but possesses personality. Their difficulty, which is also ours, came from the varying use of the term "person." In its earlier sense of "aspect" it could well be applied to the constituents of the Deity, which were conceived as distinguishable but not separable: but in that sense it would be meaningless to say "God is a person." When the later sense, with which we are familiar, had been adopted, it was quite suitable to say "God is a person"; but the term was already appropriated by tradition to the three constituents of the Trinity, and therefore could not be used. Unfortunately, when men repeat the Athanasian Creed, or any like formula, they generally forget the change of usage, and interpret "person" in its modern sense: and that involves something like tritheism.

CHAPTER II

SIN

All the great religions recognise sin as one of the main facts of human life. But they do not all regard it in the same light: and each of them in different stages of development has described it differently. This is not the place to discuss all the varieties of thought on the subject. Our purpose only requires us to consider the conceptions of sin which have been entertained by Christians, and by the two ancient peoples—the Jews and the Greeks—from whose traditions so large a part of Christian doctrine was derived. It seems best to begin with a very slight historical sketch of the progress of opinion in those two peoples: so that we may see how and why they answered the two main questions: What is sin? and, What is the cause of sin?

What is sin? Naturally, the primitive Greeks and Hebrews did not discuss the abstract question. They approached the subject by asking, What acts are sinful? And by that they meant, What acts incur divine wrath and punishment? Having no definition to guide them, they described such acts by words which mean a

mistake[1]—a missing of the mark. The heroes in the *Iliad* and the book of *Judges* discover that they have missed the mark by finding that they have incurred plague or other misfortune. Their good intentions do not count: for it is only the deed that matters. And in that early stage of thought it is more often mistakes of ritual than moral offences which bring punishment. A good example of both these principles is the story of Uzzah, who put his hand upon the ark to prevent it from falling off the cart, and was instantly slain by a flash of lightning.

In that stage of thought wrongs done to men were rarely considered as sins. Even murder, theft and adultery were matters to be settled between the parties concerned, either by compensation or by revenge. But a strong reverence for custom, which appears both in the *Iliad* and the book of *Judges*, marks an advance towards the conception of a moral law. Gradually, in the history of both peoples, a higher conception of the divine nature enlarged the sphere of divine action. Moral offences against men came to be treated as sins against the gods, and the catalogue of such offences was gradually enlarged. The course of progress may be illustrated by a few examples from the records of each nation. At the same time, it must be remembered that the primitive idea of sin as a breach of tabu never disappeared, though it became less prominent.

[1] There are, in fact, nine Greek words which may be translated "sin." But far the most common in all periods is ἁμαρτία, which means missing the mark.

In the age of David murder and adultery of an aggravated kind are rebuked by the prophet Nathan as sins, and punished. The age of the great prophets (800–600 B.C.) witnessed a marked rise in the moral standard. Not only are the sins named in the Decalogue denounced, but also luxury, oppression, pride and cruelty. And there is the beginning of a sense that a man has some obligation towards men of other nations. Nor is it less important that Amos and his successors treat moral offences as worse than those which are ritual.

The exile worked another great change. Hitherto sin and punishment had been treated mainly as affecting the tribe or nation rather than the individual offender. The exile saw the beginning of personal religion. For Israel ceased to be a nation, and became a Church, whose members were individually responsible for their acts, and for the effect of their acts upon the character of the community. The book of *Leviticus*, a product of the exile, shows how moral rules were more sharply defined, and their application extended. Unfortunately, there was at the same time a recrudescence of the primitive fear of ceremonial offences.

The conquests of Alexander, which spread Greek culture over western Asia, produced among the Jews a school of ethical teachers who gave up the nationalism which had hitherto lowered the character of Jewish religion, and treated morality as the same for all men. For them sin may be said to be "the lack of that

active good feeling which is admired in all civilised countries."

But their influence had not time to take full effect. The horrors of the Maccabæan age produced an intense nationalism in religion, which regarded a breach of the Levitical law as the only sin, and exalted cruelty, treachery, and revenge, when directed against the foreigner, into the category of virtues.

The books which recognise and impose these various standards were all regarded as sacred when the Christian era began, and as having equal authority. Naturally, therefore, the pious Jew who studied them all had not a very clear idea what acts were sinful. The early Christian records show the influence of this confusion: for the teaching of Christ was blurred to their vision by the mist of tradition and prejudice through which they approached it.

Greek opinion on the subject of sin passed through three main stages, more or less parallel to those of Hebrew thought. In the earliest times of which we have any record, Homer and Hesiod show that ritual offences occupied a large space: but the moral standard was higher than among the Israelites of the same period.

Corresponding to the Hebrew prophets are the great tragedians, who also denounce luxury, pride, and other vices of prosperity. But in some respects their ethical sense is more advanced. They realise that there may be a conflict of loyalties; and some of the tragedies turn upon such conflicts.

In the third stage Greek thought was divided. While on the whole philosophy tended to treat sin rather as human folly than as an offence against the gods, the popular religion of the mysteries treated moral offences as sins against the gods, causing a stain which could only be removed by expiation and purification. The catalogue of acts which were regarded as sinful by the Greeks differs but little from the corresponding catalogue of the Hebrews. The difference between the two lies mainly in a difference of emphasis. In the later Greek thought ritual offences counted for very little, whereas to the Jews they seemed of primary importance.

This slight sketch is enough to show that the conceptions of sin which the Christian Church inherited from the past was by no means simple or uniform. The result was a confusion of thought whose unhappy influence can be traced through all the Christian centuries.

A similar confusion has continually shown itself with regard to the cause of sin: and its source is to be found in the history of Jewish and Greek thought. To the question, What causes man to sin? the earliest literary age of Israel answers unhesitatingly, "God alone is the cause." In the familiar story of the *Exodus* it is Jehovah who says to Moses, "I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall not let My people go": and Jehovah who, after fulfilling the promise, punishes Pharaoh for his refusal. The early books of the Old Testament offer many examples of that principle. Even the prophets of the eighth

and later centuries take the same view. In the vision which made Isaiah a prophet Jehovah says to him, "Make the heart of this people fat, and their eyes heavy, and shut their ears; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again and be healed." And similar sentiments are to be found in Amos, Ezekiel, and Trito-Isaiah. The Greek poets offer a close parallel to this phase of Hebrew thought. Homer's Agamemnon throws the responsibility of his own fault upon Zeus, "who put grim infatuation in my heart." The chorus in the Antigone of Sophocles echoes Agamemnon's view, saying, "It was truly said of old that evil soon or late seems good to the man whom God is leading to his ruin."

Yet it would not be true to say that during the period before 450 B.C. there was no change of view in Greece or Palestine. In spite of their formal adherence to the fatalistic doctrine that sin was caused by God, both Jews and Greeks steadily advanced towards a belief in man's responsibility. Sometimes the two views are found side by side in the same poem. Of course responsibility involves free will: but it was not till much later that either nation began to think about the nature of the will and the questions which arose out of it.

The five centuries which separate Trito-Isaiah[1] from St Paul were fruitful in new

[1] Trito-Isaiah is the usual name for the author or authors of Isaiah lvi.–lxvi., who wrote in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

experiences, new knowledge, and new speculation. Both Jews and Greeks in that age passed from the old simple fatalism, and sought some other explanation of sin. But their speculations took quite different lines. Greek philosophy, from the time of Plato, tended more and more to find the cause of all evil in matter. It was because the soul was bound up with matter in the human body that it was liable to sin; and therefore the desire of the true philosopher was for death to release him, and his higher life was called "the practice of death." So there was almost as complete a dualism in Greek thought as in that of the Persians who taught that Ormuz and Ahriman were two eternal principles of good and evil, ever in conflict.

Jewish speculation arrived at a practical dualism in another way. The history of the belief in Satan is obscure and is too long to be related here. The first mention of such a being is found in the book of *Job*, written perhaps about 400 B.C., where he is not an evil power, but a sort of angelic policeman. Gradually, no doubt under influences from the East, he developed first into an accuser of men, then a tempter, and finally the executor of God's wrath upon sinners. The book of *Enoch* (170–70 B.C.) represents him as the monarch of a whole tribe of evil spirits, with almost unlimited power over mankind. That is why in the New Testament he is called "the prince of this world." It is true that he was always regarded as a created being, who would ultimately be deposed from his power

and thrown into a lake of fire like that in which he tortured men. But that was to be in the uncertain future, and meanwhile his power was so great that he seemed to be a rival of Jehovah. The early Church inherited and exaggerated this practical dualism, with most unhappy results.

It was not, apparently, till the second century B.C. that Jewish thinkers began to look for the cause of sin in the fall of Adam. The story as given in *Genesis* describes the sin of Adam as causing death, but does not suggest that his descendants inherited a sinful nature from him. The first hint of such an idea is given in *Ecclesiasticus* (200 B.C.): and the earliest mention of the developed doctrine occurs in St Paul's Epistle to the *Romans*. Unfortunately, we have no means of tracing the stages by which it grew up. But the second book of *Ezra*, written some years after St Paul's death, combines with St Paul to show that a doctrine of "original sin" was widely accepted by Jews in the first century A.D.

So in the first century of our era there were current four theories as to the cause of sin—the will of God, the fall of Adam, the power of Satan, and the influence of matter. How familiar they were is shown by the fact that St Paul, in his Epistle to the *Romans*, refers with seeming approval to all four. Yet he was not satisfied with any, for in the seventh chapter he puts forward another theory, which, though not quite convincing, is superior to the others. It is a difficult chapter, for the apostle was wrestling with a new and difficult conception. But the

main idea is plain—man is a creature of a double nature, partly animal, partly spiritual. Often his animal instincts overpower his spiritual nature, causing him to relapse into habits which were not wrong for animals, but are wrong for men. It is that victory of the animal which constitutes sin.

This promising line of thought, which St Paul opened up, was not pursued by the early Church. Throughout the history of the Church, till quite modern times, the other four explanations of sin are repeated in varying forms. Predestination was taught by St Augustine and by Calvin, and still has its adherents. The belief that Satan and his demons are the cause of sin made life in the early and middle ages almost intolerable. It is only of late years that we have ceased to take it seriously. So with the fall of Adam. Until the middle of last century it was practically unquestioned. The dualism which regards matter as the cause of sin has been chiefly influential in promoting all forms of asceticism. That influence has declined since the Renaissance: but in less extravagant forms it still affects a large part of human life. Combined with some elements of St Paul's theory it has given rise to disastrous misconceptions. All thinking men are aware of a conflict between flesh and spirit, the animal instincts and passions and the higher life. But when the animal instincts are regarded as the outcome of an evil thing called matter, their nature is transformed. Instead of being considered to be, as they are, our innocent and

natural inheritance from our animal ancestry, whose proper satisfaction is right and necessary, they come to be thought in themselves evil, and so the man who feels any such impulse regards it as a proof that he is a sinner. That unhappy mistake has been, and is, the cause of endless misery and despair.

Puzzled by these conflicting and unsatisfying theories, the Church has never been able to form a definite and convincing conception of sin. But she is now in a fair way to do so. It is the way to which St Paul pointed, but made plainer by two principles to which he was a stranger.

The first is evolution. Directly we realise that man's animal nature is the outcome of a long development, during which the passions and appetites were necessary for survival and for progress, we see that they must be relatively permanent in man's nature, and that they are innocent unless they are allowed to override the newer spiritual impulses.

The second is the importance of the will. The higher and the lower instincts are not really (as St Paul implies) two forces fighting independently. What gives the strength to either is the will. Whichever prevails, it is because the will has taken its side. The freedom of the will began to be discussed by Christian theologians as early as the third century: but until the weakness of the ancient theories of sin was exposed, free will could not be, as it is now becoming, a corner-stone of the moral system.

St Paul's teaching, supplemented by evolution

and a theory of the will, is enabling us to form a more satisfying conception of sin. God's purpose in creation is what St Paul calls "the manifestation of the sons of God"—that is, the development of moral agents who can be in some sense His friends. Their friendship must be freely given, for a virtuous automaton has little value. Therefore man's will must be free: he must be able to do wrong as well as right. Just as the intelligence of the higher animals and of man is developed by the clash between natural impulse and physical law, so the will is trained partly by contact with the physical order, and partly by submission to the order of that society into which each man is born. The same principle applies to nations and tribes. Societies as well as individuals have advanced from a lower to a higher standard of moral action.

For each individual "the law" (as St Paul calls it) is the standard of his society, or of the best which he knows. It compels him to curb some of his natural instincts: but for the most part he obeys unconsciously or unwillingly. When he deliberately sets himself against that law—which is usually regarded as having divine authority—he sins. That explains the apparent paradox that sin is not the same for all. An act, though it be mischievous, is not a sin unless it involves setting the will against the best we know. Jacob did not sin when he married two wives: St Paul did not sin when he accepted slavery as a matter of course: Sir Thomas More did not sin when he condemned witches to be burned, because he

was administering a law supposed to have divine authority. The experience of after-ages has proved such acts to be mistaken (ἁμαρτίαι), because their consequences are evil; and when the mistake has been recognised the act becomes a sin. Even within the same society there may be differences of standard. Wilful ignorance, or ignorance which is due to vice, is no excuse for an evil deed. But where ignorance of the true standard has been imposed by circumstances the failure to conform to it, however wrong, is not sinful.

So we have travelled a long way from the primitive notion that nothing matters except the act, and have reached the position indicated by our Lord's comments on the commandments, that what really matters is the intention—the state of mind of the agent. This is a general statement which is open to casuistical objections, such as any ingenious person might raise. But the main principle stands firm, and when accepted it lends relief to many troubled minds. It enables us to recognise the vast amount of good in the ignorant heathen races, instead of condemning them utterly, because many of their practices would be sinful in us. It permits us to see that what the ninth Article calls original sin is not sin at all, but natural appetite which may lead to sin if the will does not control it. Such is the teaching of the Council of Trent (1546), in opposition to the pronouncements of Augustine and Luther and Calvin. In other words, this doctrine enables us to take a hopeful view both of ourselves and of mankind.

There is another aspect of this doctrine. Since will is an essential element in man's being, it follows that the further sin is removed from accident or external action, and the closer it is connected with the will, the greater is the guilt which it involves. That is the awful truth implied in our Lord's familiar words: "Out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings."[1] Wilful acts proceed from man's inner nature, and remain a part of him unless they are cut off by the sword of repentance. That shows how fatal is the error of those whom William James praises as the "healthy minded"; who are content to turn away from a past course of evil, and forget all about it, saying that regrets are vain. Still more fatal is the error of "the modern man" who (as Sir Oliver Lodge and others tell us) "does not worry at all about sin." His natural reaction against the false teaching of Calvinism, that human nature is utterly depraved, has carried him in a wrong direction. For he can deny the importance of sin only if he denies that sin separates him from God: and that means that there is no tie of kinship such as sin must break. In other words, he repudiates the spiritual heritage which gives value to his own being.

If the will be thus centred, how important is the training of the will! Nature begins it by offering a varied experience. Society continues it (all too imperfectly) in the home and the school.

[1] St. Matt. xv. 19.

Its completion rests with the man himself, aided by the grace of God. But the psychology of the will is outside the scope of this little book.

Behind this discussion there lies a further question: What is evil, and whence comes it? That is one of the mysteries of the universe, which no man has solved. We can indeed see that if there were no evil nothing could be called good by contrast: that if there were no choice between good and evil free will would be meaningless. But we can also see that the optimist who declares

"The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound,"[1]

is talking poetical nonsense. For to deny the reality of evil is to reject the universal testimony of experience. There can be no fruitful discussion of sin or pain which does not take the existence of evil for granted as an ultimate fact.

[1] Browning, "Abt Vogler."

CHAPTER III

THE ATONEMENT

At the root of every great religion there lies a conviction that sin deprives man of God's favour, and a consequent yearning for the remission of sin and reconciliation with God. The means by which this object may be attained are described in metaphors drawn from many sources—from sacrifice, from slavery, from medicine, from Hebrew ritual and from Roman law. We read in the English Bible of atonement, cleansing, expiation, forgiveness, propitiation, purging, ransom, redemption, and satisfaction. But these terms are all used to translate a single Hebrew verb and two corresponding nouns: *kippér*, *kópher*, *kippúrim*. The Hebrew usage is better than ours: for all these words are only different names for the same thing. The problem of reconciliation is one and not many; and we should do well to employ only one term. The familiar English word "atonement," if we use it in its proper sense of *setting at one*, without importing ideas of suffering or sacrifice, is adequate to express the essential meaning of all those metaphors. In that sense, therefore, the word will be employed throughout this chapter.

We must also take account of another Hebrew word: *berith*, which is translated "covenant." Again and again the historians of Israel tell us that God made a fresh covenant with His people.[1] The first of these covenants is recorded in Exod. xxiv., the last in Nehemiah ix. And Jeremiah proclaims the promise of a new and better covenant to be given in the future.[2] The object of every such covenant is to set Jehovah and His people at one. Each party makes a promise to the other; the people promise to observe certain laws of conduct, and Jehovah promises to reward them with material blessings. In every case the covenant is, as we should say, sealed[3] with a sacrificial feast. The covenant sacrifice was not the burnt offering, which made satisfaction for sin, but the peace offering. Small portions of the victim were burned, but the flesh made a feast for those who offered it.[4] To share in such a feast, therefore, was equivalent to the modern ceremony of signing and sealing a formal contract. In fact, Nehemiah tells how the ancient and the modern methods were combined on a memorable occasion.[5] While the people shared

[1] The covenants made with individual patriarchs are recorded in Genesis as anticipations of the covenant with the people whose ancestors they were.

[2] Jer. xxi. 31–34.

[3] The Hebrew phrase is literally "to cut a covenant," because a covenant was always made by killing an animal, or drawing blood from a man. The Latin phrase *icere fœdus* has the same sense.

[4] See, for instance, Gen. xxxi. 54.

[5] Neh. ix.

the sacrificial feast, their leaders and representatives set their seal to a written promise that the law should be observed.

It is very necessary to understand this custom, for it supplies the key to the words which our Lord used at the last supper. Though the reports of St Paul and the Gospels differ in details, they agree that He spoke to this effect: "This wine represents the blood of our covenant sacrifice, in which I am to be the victim." In other words, He taught His disciples to regard His death as the seal of a new covenant, assuring a new relation between God and man, not as a sacrifice offered to God for the remission of sin.[1] Perhaps it is permissible to quote a modern incident by way of illustration. There is a story that one of Garibaldi's heroic followers, as he lay dying, pointed to the blood which was pouring from his wound, and said, "This is the ink in which the charter of Italian unity will be signed." The metaphor was more natural to a modern speaker than one taken from sacrifice; but its use may help us to understand the application of the sacrificial image.

What was the nature of the New Covenant? It was nothing else than the Gospel which Jesus had been proclaiming in Galilee and in Judæa. Instead of seeking salvation from a stern ruler's wrath by a painful obedience, He bade men realise that God was their Father, loving and

[1] It is now recognised that the words peculiar to St Matt. xxvi. 28, "for the remission of sins," were added later to the traditional record.

ready to forgive so soon as they truly turned to Him. As sons of the same Father, all men were their brethren, to whom they owed love in thought and action. Man's part in the new covenant was therefore love to God and love to mankind. That involved a momentous change on man's side. But on God's side no change was required; for He was always the Father. The message is not "God will be love," but "God is love." The death of the Anointed One (the Messiah), which sealed the covenant, was not needed in order to appease the Creator's wrath against His creatures, nor to stimulate the love of the Father for His children. But it was needed in order to change the hearts of men. Nothing less could have brought home to them the meaning of the revelation which had been given, partly in words but chiefly in a divine life. That is what the crucifixion has effected for all time. Who can deny, be he Christian or Jew, Mohammedan or Agnostic, that it is the death of Christ which has ever made men obedient to the teaching of His life? From the time when Paul resolved to "preach nothing but Christ crucified," down to our own day, when missionaries carry the same message into darkest Africa, it has been the Cross which has, for one and all, sealed the covenant of hope and love and freedom.

When men are faced by a great new fact, they are forced to try to explain it to themselves and to others. Yet until experience has taught them, they must use their old language and old ideas,

however ill suited for the purpose. That is why the first attempts to describe electricity and the French Revolution were so grotesquely inadequate. How can we wonder, then, if even the apostolic writers, inspired and yet bewildered by their amazing experiences, used inadequate language in their efforts to explain the most significant event in human history? The life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ had wrought a revolution without a parallel. Men who came under its transforming influence felt that they had entered into a new relation with God. They were sure that they were reconciled to Him, that their sins were forgiven, that they had begun a new life. They burned to impart their knowledge and their happiness to others. But when they tried to proclaim the good news they were obliged to translate it into the old forms of speech and of thought; for the new terms and the new ideas, which the Gospel has gradually created, were yet in the future.

Now for a Jew the language of religion was the language of sacrifice. He was especially familiar with the rites of the "Day of Atonement," when victims were expressly offered for the sins of the people; and of the Passover, when each family sprinkled the blood of a lamb in order to keep the Angel of Death from its firstborn. How natural that he should forget that the life and death and resurrection of the Lord are one inseparable whole, and fix his thoughts upon the crucifixion alone, saying "The

death of the Messiah is a sacrifice for our sins," or, "It is the Atonement."

Another Jewish conception of atonement was derived from Isaiah liii., where the sufferings of Israel, the martyr nation, are described as the "satisfaction" for the sins of the other nations; so that those nations penitently proclaim, "The Lord hath laid on him (*i.e.* on Israel) the iniquities of us all."

The Maccabæan age believed that the blood of the martyrs made propitiation for the sins of the people[1]; and the prophet's words came to be understood as describing an individual martyr instead of the personified nation. How natural, therefore, is the application of the passage which is made in the Acts of the Apostles,[2] and in the epistles![3] One quotation may serve as an example: "He made him to be sin [*i.e.* to suffer the penalty of sin] who knew no sin."[4]

Both these Jewish interpretations of our Lord's Passion imply the same pair of beliefs, which the Jews accepted without question. God's wrath against sinners could be propitiated by suffering or death; and the sufferer need not be the same as the sinner. Whether Christ was identified with the Paschal Lamb or with the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, the Atonement is assumed to rest upon these two principles. To trace their influence upon Christian thought would involve writing the history of many centuries. Here we must be content with pointing

[1] Macc. vi. 29. [2] Acts viii. 30.
[3] Heb. xiii. 12; Rom. iv. 25. [4] 2 Cor. v. 21.

out that all through the nineteenth century religious thinkers were occupied in trying to explain away the application of those principles, as revolting to the modern conscience.

They were not successful, for the doctrine of substitution is plainly stated in several of the epistles. That fact will remain a stumbling-block until men recognise that when St Paul and others used such language they were writing as Jews whose thought was not yet fully emancipated, so that they sometimes relapsed into the language of Jewish tradition.

We do not find such language in the narratives of the Gospels[1] and the Acts. Among the sayings of our Lord and of the Apostles there recorded, there is no trace of the doctrine that God accepted the suffering and death of Christ as an equivalent for the sufferings, in this world or the next, which were demanded by the sins of men. When Jesus speaks,[2] or even St Peter,[3] the remission of sins is described as the fruit of repentance and faith. The essence of the doctrine of atonement, as presented in the Gospels and Acts, is contained in the parable of the Prodigal Son. It is in harmony with the teaching of the great prophets of Israel, who denied all efficacy to sacrifice as a means of atonement, and promised the Divine forgiveness only on the ground of repentance and "the fear of God" (which was

[1] For the apparent exception in St Matthew, see the note on p. 14 above.

[2] See Luke vii. 36–50; xv. 11–32; xix. 1–10.; xxiv. 47.

[3] See Acts iii. 19; v. 31; x. 35.

their phrase for "faith"), and strenuous moral action. The familiar words of Micah speak for them all: "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"[1]

We should do great injustice to St Paul if we supposed that the doctrines of sacrifice and substitution were the main substance of his teaching about the Atonement. In fact they occupied, as it were, only a corner of his mind. When he was most truly the Christian Apostle and least the Jewish Rabbi he found the basis of Atonement either in faith, by which he meant not mere belief, but love and trust and devotion; or in the mystical union of the believer with Christ, whereby he dies unto sin and rises again unto justification; or else in the operation of the indwelling Spirit of God, which transforms the spirit of man.

The author of the Fourth Gospel, except in a single allusion,[2] makes no reference to sacrifice or propitiation. He describes Atonement in three ways: (1) as personal devotion: "He that hath faith in the Son hath eternal life";[3] (2) as mystical union: "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us";[4] (3) as illumination, knowing the truth by intuition and experience: "This is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God."[5]

So Paul the mystic and the champion of faith, and John the mystic and the champion of truth,

[1] Micah vi. 8. [2] St John i. 36. [3] St John iii. 36.
[4] St John xvii. 21. [5] St John xvii. 3.

both show how the nature of the Atonement can be expressed without recourse to theories of propitiation or of substitution, which are inconsistent with the higher conceptions of God's nature. At the same time, by the variety of their language, they warn us not to fancy we can find a single formula which will completely express the meaning of the central fact in human history. Our best hope of approaching to a true description lies in keeping very near to the words of our Lord and His disciples, merely translating them into the language of our time. Jesus by His life, His words, and His passion, offered men a new knowledge of God and a new standard of conduct. For each man who had vision to see or faith to trust, and zeal to obey the law of love, the covenant was thereby made, the Atonement realised; for God's hand was already stretched out, and man had but to grasp it. But what could secure each man and all mankind from losing hold, from forgetting their pledge? There must be some act which could never be forgotten. And when Pilate, the representative of the world-wide empire, condemned the Holy One to death, he accomplished that act. The crucifixion is the seal set upon the new covenant, which has, as a simple matter of fact, secured the adherence of an ever-increasing multitude to the law of love. For it is the one event in all history which mankind can never forget.

There remains yet a question to be asked. Was it necessary that revelation should come as it were "in the form of a servant"? Why

should not "the light that lighteth every man" flash upon their sight with a convincing glory? The question touches so nearly upon the mysteries of the universe that no one can hope to do more than suggest a partial answer. Yet each is bound to contribute what little he can. So I will not shrink from offering two closely connected thoughts for consideration.

If there be truth in the account given of the Incarnation in our first chapter; if Jesus be the perfect manifestation of the immanent Godhead, who dwells in some measure in all creation; then between Him and us there is such real kinship that we may claim Him as the type and perfection of our nature; then He is the ideal high priest of humanity, who speaks for mankind to God and for God to mankind. He must not, however, be "a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities."[1] No human life is typical which is not shadowed by pain and humiliation. No lips can speak to the heart of man that have never uttered a groan. Explain it how we may, pain is a sacrament which all must taste ere they are full members of the brotherhood of man.

The service of man, in so far as it is real, uplifting, redemptive, has its root in sympathy; and sympathy means not only feeling for others, but feeling with them, sharing their pain, their weakness, their sorrow. The rich man who chooses to live among the poor in a city slum; the pure and refined woman who shelters and

[1] Heb. iv. 15.

befriends the prostitute ; the doctor who joins a colony of lepers, knowing well that he must sooner or later contract their loathsome disease ; the patriot who challenges death in the hope that even his murderers may thereby be made free ; all these devote themselves on behalf of men who will never be conscious of their debt unless they are redeemed by the sacrifice and their eyes opened. This is no exception, but the rule. Look where we may upon human life, we find the same law, that he who would uplift a fellow-man must stoop to his level ; he who would relieve suffering must in a very real sense share it. What is the reason of that law ? We seek an answer to the question in vain. That law is part of the mystery of pain which baffles our thought. But the existence of the law helps us to understand why the Redeemer of mankind must be "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." It enables us to accept the fact of His suffering without impugning the Divine justice. For it is one thing to affirm that suffering is so acceptable to God that one man's pain may blot out his brother's guilt ; it is quite another thing to recognise in the Atonement the supreme example of a universal law, that no man can redeem his brother without entering into the fellowship of his affliction.

CHAPTER IV

THE RESURRECTION

That Jesus appeared to some of His disciples after His death is a fact for which there is an extraordinary amount of evidence. The earliest witness is St Paul, who quotes his own experience as well as the reports of others (1 Cor. xv. 4–8). Three of the Evangelists describe two or more appearances each; and there is no reason to doubt that the lost conclusion of St Mark's Gospel[1] contained a similar narrative. Also from the Acts of the Apostles we learn that, from the first, the Resurrection held a central place in the apostles' preaching. About the fact, then, there is no need for any discussion here. But about the manner or form in which the Lord "appeared" there is less certainty: for St Paul and the Evangelists seem to have different conceptions. The difference may be described in general terms by saying that while the Evangelists emphasise the material nature of Christ's resurrection body, St Paul indicates that it was

[1] It is well known that the genuine Gospel of St Mark ends abruptly at the eighth verse of the sixteenth chapter; and that verses 9–20 in our Bibles are a compilation from the other Gospels, made by a later hand in order to fill the blank.

"spiritual." As St Paul is (by some thirty years) the earlier writer, he has the first claim to be heard.

St Paul's great hymn to the resurrection—it is a hymn and not a logical discourse—dwells upon two main themes: (1) The resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee of our own, and (2) That which rises is not "flesh and blood," but a "spiritual body." The importance of the first is so plain and so generally acknowledged by his converts that the apostle does not dwell long upon it. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain; your faith is vain."[1] Why so? Partly because, as he writes to the Romans, it was by His resurrection that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God.[2] Partly because the actual resurrection of one Man gives an assurance which nothing else can give, that resurrection is possible for all men. "Christ is risen, the firstfruits of them that slept."[3] That assurance alone can satisfy the claims of human personality, and lay to rest the obstinate questionings, provoked by the evil in the world, which have in all ages challenged the justice of the Creator. For only if men have a share in eternal life can they truly be called sons of God, and not merely His slaves. Therefore belief in the resurrection must always be one of the corner-stones of Christian faith.

Plainly St Paul's argument rests upon the belief, assumed by the word "firstfruits," that the mode of the resurrection is the same for

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 14. [2] Rom. i. 4. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 20.

Jesus and for all who rise after Him. That belief has generally been held by all the Church; and indeed it seems inevitable. Therefore what St Paul says of the resurrection in general must have been intended to apply to the Lord's resurrection. "Flesh and blood," he writes, "cannot inherit the kingdom of God." That which will rise is not a natural but "a spiritual body."

What is a spiritual body? We naturally look to St Paul for an explanation of his own phrase. Like ourselves, he usually contrasts body and spirit as opposite poles of man's nature, differing in their substance, their power, and their destiny. He surely would not unite the two names unless he were trying to express a new conception for which there was as yet no proper term. Some have supposed that this mysterious phrase was an anticipation of our word "personality." But if we follow the progress of the apostle's thought, we shall see that he means something more.

In the year 51, when he wrote to the Thessalonian[1] Church, he took for granted the popular Jewish[2] belief in the resurrection as the reconstitution of the earthly body of flesh. In 56 or 57, writing to the Corinthians,[3] he described the new body as bearing the same sort of relation to the old as the corn plant does to the seed—manifestly different and yet developed from it.

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 15–17.

[2] See note at the end of this chapter.

[3] 1 Cor. xv. 35–45.

The second epistle[1] to the Corinthians, written only a few months later, shows that his thought has reached another stage. "We know," he says, "that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens." Then changing the metaphor, as his wont is, he speaks of the new garment with which the soul is to be clothed when the old one is to be superseded. Of course he did not intend either image to be taken literally; but the meaning which underlies both is the same, that the "spiritual body," instead of being developed out of the natural body, is a gift from the celestial sphere. So far as we know, he retained this belief to the end. In the last epistle which touches upon the future life he writes, "I am in a strait betwixt the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you" (Phil. i. 23, 24).[2] Plainly the apostle means that "to be with Christ" is the immediate consequence of "departing." That is consistent with what he had written to the Corinthians. It is, in fact, a

[1] 2 Cor. v. 1–4. Auguste Sabatier's "St Paul," pp. 180–185, 341–344.

[2] The two other references in this epistle (iii. 10, 11, and 20, 21) are not, as some scholars have supposed, inconsistent with the view stated above. The former expresses a fear that, after all, St Paul might not be thought worthy of the resurrection. (Like the Pharisees in general, he believed the resurrection to be reserved only for the few.) The same fear is expressed in 1 Cor. ix. 27. In the latter passage he returns to the long-discarded hope that he may live to witness the Advent.

repetition in other words of 2 Cor. v. 6, 8, where we read that "to be absent from the body" is the same thing as "to be at home with the Lord." Both statements alike imply that the spirit after death passes directly into the presence of Christ.

Neglecting shades of difference, we find three clear stages in the apostle's advancing faith. He began with the common Jewish belief that after a few months or years in Sheol, the soul would be restored to its "natural body" and share the reign of the Messiah on earth. Five years later, still hoping that the Advent was very near, he thought of the resurrection body much as did those early Christians on whose tombs in the catacombs we see the butterfly growing out of the chrysalis pictured as the type of the new life. A little later we see that the expectation of a speedy Advent, and with it the thought of Sheol, had passed away from his mind. He now pictures the spiritual body as coming down from heaven to clothe the soul very soon after its release from the body.[1] So that when the aged apostle looked beyond his approaching death, he saw himself not as a disembodied spirit, awaiting the last judgment in the gloom of Sheol, but as clothed in his body of glory and passing at once into the presence of his Lord.

Still we have not found a definition of the spiritual body. Let us approach it another way. The word "personality" was unknown to the

[1] The Jews believed that the soul did not finally part from the body till the third day after death.

ancient world, and the idea for which it stands was very dimly conceived. Except a few philosophers, the ancients could not imagine themselves thinking, loving, or acting, without the familiar body wherein reside the brain, the heart, and the nervous force. To them personal identity seemed to reside in the body. When, therefore, they were told of a future life, they could not fail to ask, "In order to be our real selves, must we not be restored to this body of flesh?" The answer which St Paul gives is both Yes and No. He says in effect, "You shall be yourself. You shall have a body, but not of flesh. Somehow, somewhere—how or where, I know not—you shall have all that is needful for a real, personal, active life. The spiritual body, with which you will be clothed, will be the efficient instrument of the soul, serving for recognition, for love, and for service. I cannot explain its nature, except by saying what it is not. I cannot describe its form. But it will be free from change and decay, and from the passions which war with the spirit; and it will possess all the qualities which contribute to a perfect life." We would fain ask further questions. But to them there is no answer; and with this we may well be content.

While the great apostle was thus "forgetting the things which are behind, and pressing on" towards an adequate conception of the life to come, a large part of the Church refused to follow his lead. The Judaising Christians clung

to the old materialistic view of the resurrection, and unconsciously moulded the tradition of our Lord's resurrection into accordance with it. Comparing the simple statement of St Paul,[1] which was probably derived from St Peter and St James, with the narratives of the first, third, and fourth Gospels, we can trace a process of development, and see that the additions made by the later writers all have the same tendency to translate the spiritual into the material. Legendary in their tone and inconsistent with each other, the additions were readily accepted in the uncritical age of which they were the natural growth. Men failed to perceive that these accretions obscured, if they did not destroy, the resemblance between our Lord's resurrection and that of His disciples, so that He could not, without unreality, be called "the firstfruits of them that slept." So, in spite of St Paul's teaching, the belief in a resurrection of the *flesh*[2] soon became dominant in the Church, was embodied in the creeds, and remained almost unquestioned until modern times. But the advance of knowledge, especially during the last hundred years, has revealed a number of reasons, critical, historical, and scientific, which make the old view difficult to maintain. Those who are

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 4–8.

[2] It is important to remember that "flesh" is the word in the Latin of the Apostles' Creed. It is retained in our Prayer-book in the Order for the Visitation of the Sick, and in the offices for Infant and Adult Baptism, but altered to "body" in the daily services.

influenced by such reasons are thankful when they realise that St Paul's writings, when read without prepossession, point the way to a belief which is consistent with modern conceptions of the universe.

Those who follow the guidance of St Paul are not, as is sometimes imagined, in danger of losing their hold upon the fact of the resurrection. Though they recognise a legendary element in the four Gospels, they know that such accretions are inevitable in popular narratives, and cannot be urged as disproving the truth of the main story. They see that, from Pentecost onward, the resurrection inspired the preaching of all the apostles. They rely upon St Paul's almost contemporary account of a series of manifestations, confirmed as it is by the plain fact that his own life was transformed by his vision of the risen Christ. They believe that the recorded "appearances" were actual events, not fictitious or imaginary: but they regard them, not as the presentment of flesh and blood to the bodily eye, but as the manifestation of a spiritual body to spiritual perception.

NOTE.—There is a close connexion between St Paul's teaching about the resurrection and that of the Jews. The popular religion of Israel pictured the souls of the dead as not quite extinct, but having a gloomy and torpid existence in Sheol, from which they could sometimes be roused for a moment by necromancy. This belief, bound up with all the evils of witchcraft,

was severely condemned by the law and the prophets. After the return from the exile it was gradually modified: but not till the third century before Christ did the orthodox Jews admit the belief in a future life: and the first[1] definite mention of it occurs in the book of *Daniel* (B.C. 165) and in two sections of the composite book of *Enoch* (a little prior to 160 B.C.). These predict that the enemies of Israel will be destroyed by the direct intervention of Jehovah, who will establish Israel as the rulers of a world-empire; and the heroes and martyrs of the past will be restored to life and reign for ever with their countrymen. At the same time, the worst sinners will be restored to their bodies, in order that they may endure a more perfect punishment than the mere imprisonment of Sheol.

The belief in this partial and material resurrection, though it persisted in the popular mind, was replaced in the higher teaching of the first century before Christ by a more spiritual conception. The Messianic Kingdom was now regarded as temporary, not eternal. It was to be followed by the resurrection and the judgment. Then Israel was to enjoy eternal bliss in a new heaven and a new earth, created for them in place of the old. Since this was no place for the body of flesh and blood, the resurrection was differently conceived. It was either the revival of the pure spirit, lifted out of Sheol, or the investment of the spirit in a new body, which is variously described as a "garment of glory"

[1] Possibly Isaiah xxvi. 19 may be earlier.

(1 Enoch lxii. 16)[1] or "shining light" (1 Enoch cviii. 12). In 2 Enoch xxii. 8 (written about the beginning of the Christian era) we read, "The Lord said unto Michael, Go and take Enoch from out his earthly garments, and put him into the garments of My glory." The reader will see at once how the earlier and the later Jewish teaching correspond to the views presented in *Thessalonians* and *Corinthians* respectively.

[1] For these references I am indebted to the kindness of Canon Charles.

CHAPTER V

JUDGMENT AND THE LIFE TO COME

FEW men can join in singing Luther's great hymn[1] or stand before Michael Angelo's picture of the last judgment without feeling an emotion of awe. What is the reason? It is not only that those two works of genius embody a tradition which dates from the Maccabæan age, when the books of Daniel and Enoch[2] first presented a picture of a great Assize, at which all the world should be judged; a tradition maintained and augmented by St Paul and the book of Revelation; so emphasised by the Mediæval Church as to seem the central truth of religion; so celebrated in later times in pictures and hymns and sermons that it seems almost to have been wrought into the fibre of men's minds. It is also because this tradition, however obsolete the imagery which it employs, does vividly present a truth of which the human conscience is keenly aware. If the world is not the sport of chance, but ruled by a moral power, each man's life must somehow be

[1] "Great God, what do I see and hear?"

[2] The book of Daniel was written about 165 B.C. and two large sections of the composite "Book of Enoch" between 170 and 160 B.C.

judged, not only in detail but as a whole; and judgment must in some way determine his future.

The imagery is obsolete for two reasons. It implies a flat earth, which is the main part of the universe, overarched by a solid vault of heaven; it requires us to accept the belief in the reconstitution of the earthly body which St Paul had renounced when he wrote to the Corinthians;[1] and it is closely connected in the popular mind with those materialistic views of hell, derived from pagan sources, which darkened the whole life of the Middle Ages. The mediæval priests thought these picturesque terrors the only security for moral life: and some of our clergy cling to them for the same reason. But that was not the feeling of St Paul, nor of his great disciple who wrote the Fourth Gospel. The word judgment occurs on almost every page of that Gospel: yet only twice in connection with "the last day,"[2] and then without any of the conventional imagery. Bishop Westcott, in his edition of the Fourth Gospel, sums up the teaching in these words:—

"In one sense, judgment, like the gift of life, is immediate. It lies in the existence of an actual relation which carries with it its final consequences.[3] In another sense it is still future, so far as it will be realised in a spiritual order of being on the last day. There is a resurrection of life and a resurrection of judgment, in which

[1] See pages 25 and 26.
[2] St John. v. 19; xii. 49.
[3] St John iii. 18.

the issues of both, begun here, will be completely fulfilled. Meanwhile the process is going on upon earth. The manifestation of perfect holiness, presented to the world in perfect self sacrifice, has set up a standard which cannot be put out of sight. Under this aspect Christ's coming was a sentence of judgment.[1] The judgment of the sovereign power of the world in the Passion has left men no excuse. In that they can see the mind of God, and according as they surrender themselves to it, or resist it, they find life or judgment."

Judgment, as St John conceives it, is inseparable from the manifestation of the divine in the life of man. It is, so to speak, the shadow which ever waits upon the light. "This is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light." But "he that believeth is not judged. . . . He hath passed from death unto life."[2]

The modern Churchman bases his conception of judgment upon this teaching of St Paul and St John's Gospel. The latter appeals to him all the more because it contains no picture of everlasting punishment. There "death" means extinction, not torment; while "life" means a timeless blessedness, of which the assurance is given to such as love the light and walk in the light upon earth.

Every picture of the future state, which is not painted in lurid colours borrowed from Maccabæan or mediæval writers, must be but a vague

[1] St John ix. 39. [2] St John xii. 31 ; iii. 18 ; v. 24.

shadow of a mystery, felt rather than seen. Yet we must endeavour to present a faint outline of the faith which we inherit from St Paul—speaking for his Master, whose own words on the subject are not recorded.[1]

The resurrection and the "day of judgment" are not collective but individual. On the day of each man's death the judgment, which began in his childhood, is completed; and a new condition is assigned to him, corresponding in some way with his earthly life. If the sentence be not "death," the soul is invested with a spiritual body. As to the nature of that body we have no knowledge: but a hint is given in some recorded words of our Lord, "In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are *as the angels of God in heaven.*"[2] That is but a hint, which we know not how to interpret. We cannot describe the life to come. If we felt tempted to try, we should be warned by the unspeakable triviality and futility of the recent "revelations" of spiritualism. But we may venture to affirm two or three of those convictions which are most deeply rooted in Christian hearts. The first is an assurance that the future life will fulfil the best aspirations of the present. It must surely, therefore, afford larger opportunities of love, of knowledge, of worship, of growth, and of service.

[1] Some of the sayings which are attributed to Him in the Gospels are plainly borrowed from current Apocalyptic literature.

[2] St Matt. xxii. 30.

But, in the second place, which of us does not feel that before being able to use such opportunities, he must be changed—strengthened, purified, elevated? For most men a period of education, of discipline, would seem to be required. The Roman doctrine of purgatory, which is based on that belief, has been so corrupted as to cause evil rather than good. But there surely is a truth behind it, which may yet find suitable expression.

The third feeling is more difficult to express in words. All Christian faith in the life to come is bound up with the conviction that personality will remain: that we shall remember[1] the past and be conscious of our identity. And yet personality, as we now understand it, is so largely negative—consists so largely in the distinctions and limitations which divide us from each other—that we cannot but look for it to be transformed. Surely there must be an expansion. The positive elements of personality must be developed, the negative reduced; and the barriers which now separate soul from soul—even the nearest and dearest—must be removed, so that our new life may fulfil the aspiration which our present life has failed to realise: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."[2]

[1] Dante has divined that such memory may be freed from the pain or passion which now colours our pictures of the past. See *Purgatorio* I. 85–90.

[2] St John xvii. 21.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Church is the natural, the inevitable, sequel to the revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ. Those who believed that God had "spoken to them by His Son"[1] were by that belief bound together more closely than by the ties of blood. They were united by the consciousness of His spiritual presence among them. They were "brethren in Christ." St Paul was but giving poetical expression to their common feeling when he spoke of the Church as the body of which the risen Christ was the Head.[2] Yet the Gospels do not indicate that our Lord gave His disciples any instructions about the organisation of the Church; and even leave us in doubt whether He directly authorised the formation of such a body. Much depends upon the way in which we interpret the reports of what He said about the Second Advent. If the disciples understood Him rightly, and He foretold a return within their lifetime, then He could not consistently propose to found a permanent society,

[1] Heb. i. 2.

[2] Rom. xii. 4, 5; Eph. iv. 15, 16.

equipped with a regular order of ministers. St Paul held that belief till after his second missionary journey, expecting the end of the world almost immediately; and it was only in his last few years that he made plans for a Church which would endure.

The idea, first suggested by St Augustine, and most persuasively presented in Seeley's *Ecce Homo*, that when our Lord spoke of the kingdom of heaven He meant the Church, has few advocates among scholars of the present day. Nor, if that view were correct, would it bear out the claim that the organisation of the Church was derived from our Lord's instructions. For His recorded saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven," implies a process of gradual development which is the very reverse of deliberate organisation. Such, in fact, is the process of which we read in the Acts of the Apostles and in the epistles of St Paul, and which we trace further in the records of the first three centuries. Chosen, trained and inspired by their Master, the twelve were already, though they knew it not, the nucleus of a Church, as it were in solution. The shock of the day of Pentecost crystallised the diffused elements into a solid body. For the legendary details of St Luke's narrative ought not to obscure the main fact that, by some wonderful impulse, the little band of anxious mourners was transformed into a society with a mission, and found a leader and spokesman in St Peter. From that day forth the growth and the organisation of the Church

went on side by side, each influencing the other. In these pages it is impossible even to give an outline of that wonderful story, which is told in the books named at the end of this volume. Here it is proposed only to touch upon a few special topics, which have a bearing upon present-day problems.

(*a*) *The Catholic Church.*—Our word "Church" is used to render the Greek word *ecclesia* (ἐκκλησία). In ordinary Greek the word means any kind of assembly; but in the Septuagint, which for most Jews was *the* Bible, it bears two special senses. Generally it means what we call a congregation: *i.e.* a number of people actually assembled for worship. But since all Israelites had the right to form part of a congregation, the same word is often applied to the whole people: *e.g.* "an Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord," means simply "they shall not be admitted to citizenship" or "naturalised." The double use of the word is very important, for it suggests a great conception. The whole of the chosen people is "the congregation"; but any portion of it, when assembled, has the character of the whole, and may be called a congregation also.

The Christians, as soon as they began to form local societies, called them by this name. That they were able to do so without confusion was due to a curious cause. There was another Greek word meaning assembly—*synagogue* (συναγωγή)—and this, not *ecclesia*, was always applied by the Jews of the first century to their

meetings in places other than the temple. So the word *ecclesia* was available for use by the Christians.[1] Great has been its value to all subsequent generations; for its old associations have taught them from the first to recognise that the local "Churches" are all one in "the Church" throughout the world. In other words, the momentous conception of the Catholic Church is a direct inheritance from Judaism. That is why St Paul was able at one moment to speak of the Church at Corinth as the body of Christ,[2] and at another to describe the whole Church in the same terms.

(*b*) *The Ministry.*—Expecting the Advent very soon, the apostles did not concern themselves greatly about organisation. But, since no society can hold together without some leadership, some order had to be adopted: and the local Christian Churches adopted, as a matter of course, the arrangements customary among their neighbours. Jews were familiar with the synagogue, which was ruled by a committee of elders (presbyters).[3] Gentiles, in their clubs and religious communities, were governed by committees of elders, whose leading members were called overseers (bishops).[4] So it generally happened that if a Church was predominantly Jewish (as at Jerusalem) its officers were entitled "elders," if

[1] Synagogue is once applied to Christian meetings; but it is by St James, the most Jewish of New Testament writers (James iii. 2).

[2] 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13; Eph. iv. 16.

[3] πρεσβύτεροι.

[4] ἐπίσκοποι.

predominantly Gentile (as at Philippi), they were called "bishops." In the New Testament the two titles are used interchangeably.

Sometimes, probably, a "bishop" was so called as the chairman of a sub-committee for a special purpose, such as charitable relief. But there was no "order" of bishops in the early days, any more than there is an order of chairmen. Gradually, from a variety of causes, the name bishop was limited to one person in each local Church, who exercised the chief power. By the middle of the second century every "Church" had a bishop in something like the modern sense of the word. His "parish," as it was called, was not very large, consisting generally of a single congregation. When it included some lesser congregations these were served by presbyters. During the same period the deacons, originally appointed as relieving officers, developed into a regular third order of clergy, directly subject to the bishop, and closely associated with him in the administration of the sacraments and of charity.

(*c*) *The Claims of Episcopacy.*—When St Paul speaks of the unity of Christians[1] he describes it as consisting in their all having "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." He says nothing about "one form of government." Indeed, he could not; for, as we have seen, the monarchical bishop[2] was the

[1] Eph. iv. 5.

[2] *i.e.* a bishop who was not a mere elder, but the recognised ruler of his Church.

result of a process of development. Thirty years after St Paul's death there were still some very important Churches which had no such bishop.[1] Yet the Roman Church has always maintained that episcopacy was ordained by our Lord, that the first bishops were consecrated by the Apostles, and that consequently where there is no bishop there is no Church. Unhappily a large part of the Church of England has recently adopted the Roman view. Unhappily, for just when the old antagonisms between the Church of England and Nonconformists were dying out, they were revived and embittered by a claim which denied to the latter a place in the Church of Christ.

For this claim there is really no evidence which will bear investigation; and all the established facts point to a gradual development. The true claims of episcopacy rest upon history, which shows that the Church early found it to be the most efficient form of government, and that (in spite of abuses) it has remained so down to the present day.

If we believe that the Spirit of God directs the growth of the Church, we must believe that episcopacy has a Divine sanction—not because it is primitive, but because it may be regarded

[1] Clement's epistle shows that Corinth had no bishop in A.D. 96. Polycarp's epistle to the Philippians (*circa* 110) makes it practically certain that there was as yet no bishop at Philippi; and Ignatius' epistle to the Romans, of the same date, implies that there was none in Rome. See Lightfoot's notes and introductions to the Philippians and to the epistles of Ignatius.

as the fruit of a divinely guided evolution. The rule of "elders," on the other hand, is certainly primitive. St Paul himself, in some cases, appointed elders, and they existed in all the Churches, either under that name or the name of bishops. But a constitution which was adopted by small and scattered communities is not necessarily the best for the large Churches of a new age. The fact that the primitive Churches, after the experience of a century, all preferred the rule of "monarchical" bishops, indicates that the original form of government had proved to be a failure.

Both parties to the controversy, in fact, base their arguments upon the same fallacy, when they assume that what is primitive must be the rule for all time. If both parties would give up their *a priori* views, and look to the teaching of history, the one would cease to claim that because episcopacy is good therefore it must be apostolic, and the other to urge that because it is not apostolic it cannot be good. If they would trust to the Divine guidance which comes through experience, they would soon be able to throw down the wall of separation which now disastrously divides the Christians of England.

(*d*) *The Test of Orthodoxy.*—From the early Church, too, we may learn how to deal with the differences of doctrine which now divide not only Church from Church, but party from party, and individual from individual.

Our Lord Himself, it is confessed, formulated no creed. He demanded faith in Himself. He

proclaimed the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. He insisted on conduct as the test of worthiness to enter the kingdom of God, and love as the law of conduct; and He taught His disciples to look for a gradual and continuous revelation of truth by the action of the Holy Spirit.

St Paul believed profoundly in this revelation, and showed its fruits in his life. His epistles, read in the order of their dates, are the record of a mind which is ever advancing and therefore changing—"forgetting the things which are behind, and pressing on." The same spirit appears in his ideals for others. His favourite images are taken from building and planting; his favourite noun is not knowledge (γνῶσις) but "*fuller* knowledge" (ἐπίγνωσις). He would, we may rest assured, have applied to truth what our Lord said of the Kingdom of Heaven—"It is like a grain of mustard seed."

It was impossible that such a man when he spoke of "one faith" as a test of unity, should mean "one creed." In fact "faith" in the New Testament does not bear that sense. Only in two[1] late writings of questionable authenticity does the word approach to the sense of "creed." In Ephesians iv. 5 "one faith" means an identical feeling of love and trust and devotion for Jesus Christ, which is the inspiration of their lives. How little St Paul insisted upon uniformity of creed, we learn from his first epistle to the Corinthians, where he discusses the wrong

[1] 2 Tim. and Jude.

teaching of certain members of their Church, but never suggests that their very serious heresies should be punished by excommunication. And to some of the Philippians who were in error he says in effect, "I trust you will learn better; but meanwhile you must act up to the best you know."[1] Perhaps the most obvious difference between the Church of the first century and the Church of the fourth century is the fact that, while the former made conduct the main test of membership, the latter relaxed the standard of conduct, but insisted rigorously upon orthodoxy of belief.

So the characteristic teaching of the New Testament is that religious truth is not wholly possessed by man or by the Church, but is ever being attained through the continuous revelation of the Spirit of God. Yet even in the New Testament we find the beginning of such a reaction as is common in men whose enthusiasm is passing away, and who are alarmed by the excesses of rash speculation. In two late writings, dating probably towards the end of the first century, we read, "Hold fast the pattern of sound words. . . . Guard the deposit"[2]; and again, "That ye should earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints."[3] When truth seems to be in danger, it seems natural to fall back on the authority of tradition. Yet here is the germ of the doctrine, so fatal to the Roman Church, which represents the whole body of tradition as a single jewel, precious,

[1] Phil. iii. 15, 16. [2] 2 Tim. i. 13, 14. [3] Jude 3.

unchanging, incapable of growth or adaptation. That is the belief which has inspired the officials of the Churches, in England as well as elsewhere, to oppose every important advance in scientific or historical knowledge, and to anathematise some of the greatest and best of men. Wicliffe and Galileo barely escaped martyrdom; Savonarola, Huss, and Cranmer, were burned alive in the name of Him who said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Even the last fifty years have seen Colenso and Robertson Smith excommunicated by their respective Churches for teaching what all instructed Christians now believe, and Darwin denounced as an atheist because he put forward the doctrine of evolution, which the Church is now learning to use for her defence.

These two conceptions of truth are irreconcilable. The theory of an unchanging dogmatic deposit makes a strong appeal to the indolence and conservatism which are natural to men. But those are the true conservatives who have faith in Christ's promise and Paul's example, and trust that the human spirit is still being guided by the Spirit of God, and will ultimately be led "into all truth."

(*e*) *The Unity of the Church.*—If the contention of the last two sections be sound, how are we to think of the Catholic Church? If neither identity of organisation nor identity of creed is essential, what constitutes the unity of the Church? We find guidance in St Paul's epistles and in the Apocalypse. The local Churches of

Asia Minor were self-governing, and they differed in doctrine and organisation. Yet they were all, even Laodicea, recognised as parts of "the Church"—for each was an attempt, more or less imperfect, to realise the same ideals. Following that precedent, we may acknowledge great differences between one Church and another, and believe some to be very far from the ideal, without denying the claim of all to be a part of one whole—"holy places made with hands, which are figures of the true."[1] The principle is beautifully expressed in our communion service, which speaks of "the mystical body of Christ, which is the blessed company of all faithful people." It applies not only to Churches but to individuals within the same Church. For if all are trying to climb the same hill of truth, led by the same Spirit, some must be ahead of others, yet neither the forward nor the backward may repudiate the rest. We feel ourselves in spiritual communion with the Christians of the fourth century and the thirteenth and sixteenth. Why not also with those who in the present age have not advanced beyond them? When this principle is fully recognised the essential unity of the Church will be restored, and formal reunion will not be far off.

I cannot refrain from quoting a few sentences from the late Professor Gwatkin's *Early Church History*, for they express the same thought with admirable clearness :—

[1] Heb. ix. 24.

"The one Holy Catholic Church in which we believe is neither a visible assemblage of Churches, nor an invisible election of individuals. It is heavenly and ideal, and therefore real. It is one, because charity is already unity, whereas a mere unity of earthly government would be a unity in Satan. It is holy—not that it is free from sinners, but because it lives in Christ. It is catholic, not simply because the Churches are scattered to the ends of the earth, but because its life is of a higher order than space and time. It bears its witness in earth and heaven that so God loved the world; but it has no government or laws of human making, and councils and Churches claim in vain its august authority."

(*f*) *The Authority of the Church.*—If there be so much variety of teaching and organisation; if the Church of Christ is a body whose members have so much independent power of movement, in what does the authority of the Church consist? Where can her voice be heard? Nowhere in its fullness. The history of Christianity is a refutation of every claim to infallibility, by whatever Church it may be made. But each of the great branches of the Church may speak with authority to its own members; for each possesses a large measure of the common stock of knowledge, of experience, of traditional wisdom; and each is consecrated to be "a temple of the Holy Ghost." Of one Church or another we must be members; for Christianity is essentially a brotherhood, and he who acknowledges no brothers is not a Christian.

Our own Church is for us the body of Christ. We owe loyalty to its forms of faith and order. But loyalty is not incompatible with the recognition of shortcomings, or with the desire to effect reforms.

That truth is illustrated by the experience of the Jewish Church. The history of Israel, all through the age of the prophets, is a record of conflicts between authority and inspiration. The priests were the guardians of the accepted standards and institutions, and spoke with the authority of tradition. They were the jealous opponents of all new ideas. The prophets were the critics of old institutions, and the champions of new truths. Between these two classes there was constant conflict; and yet they were as necessary to each other as meal and leaven. Meal which is allowed to stagnate becomes corrupt; leaven by itself is not food. They must unite to make bread. So in the end there was always reconciliation. The priests built the tombs of the prophets and embodied their teaching in a revised tradition.

The same divine spirit which animated the prophets of old speaks now through theologians, philosophers, poets, and men of science. There is the same clash between inspiration and authority; and there is the same process of reconciliation. For authority and inspiration are like the lion and the unicorn, engaged in perennial battle, but both supporters of the same shield.

CHAPTER VII

THE BIBLE

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." The opening sentence of the Epistle to the Hebrews carries the reader at once to the point from which he can best view the whole course of revelation—that is, of the process by which God has gradually made Himself known to mankind. Into three lines the author of that epistle has compressed a number of important truths, which are to guide us in our study of the Bible.

1. Revelation is not a single act, but a gradual process.

2. Revelation has in all ages been given to mankind through gifted men, who are called prophets.

3. Prophets are of many different kinds, and speak with many different voices. The Jews gave the title alike to Moses the lawgiver, David the ruler, Elijah the hero, and Isaiah the poet. Nor did they confine the title to men of their own nation, but recognised prophets among other peoples.

4. The gradual and partial revelations of the ancient prophets found their confirmation and completion in Jesus Christ.

From the standpoint thus indicated we may hope to see the Bible as a whole, with its parts in due relation, and so to understand its value for ourselves and for the world.

First, we must fix our attention on the Old Testament, for the New Testament was not reckoned as Scripture till fifty years after the Epistle to the Hebrews was written. We see at once that the central feature of the Old Testament is a series of great personalities, a procession of noble figures, each bearing some gift of truth to his people, and through them to mankind. Moses, the first of these, stands in the far distance, a dim figure just emerging from the mist of legend in which all history begins; but a great man, inspired, creative, heroic. Nearer, but still afar, are Samuel and David and Elijah—the seer, the builder of a nation, the champion of national religion. After an interval, well in view, there come the great series of poet preachers, beginning with Amos and ending with Deutero-Isaiah.[1] Again there is an interval, and then a new kind of prophet appears. Books of "wisdom" in quiet times, "Apocalypses"[2] in ages of crisis, give the people such spiritual food as they crave; while the psalmists, nameless

[1] That is the name given by scholars to the author of Isa. xl.–lv., who wrote towards the end of the Babylonian exile.

[2] *E.g.* the Books of Daniel and Enoch, which foretold a speedy end of the world.

poets of all degrees of genius, teach the soul to rise on wings of aspiration.

Diverse as these figures are, contrasted in character, in manners, in experience, in genius, their faces all look in the same direction: they have all a message to their people about Israel's God and Israel's duty; they all point onward to "the kingdom of God," in which men will know God, and serve Him as they ought.

That processional group is the centre of the picture as we see it. The rest, with all its charm and interest, is only the background which is needed to throw these great figures into relief. Without the history of Ahaz and Hezekiah we could not understand Isaiah's writings; without the tragedy of Ahab, Elijah's life would have no meaning for us; and the whole of the Pentateuch enshrines the personality of Moses.

The historical books, which present the background, harmonise so well with the central figures because the essential parts of the narrative were written by men of the prophetical school, whose aim was to show the hand of Providence in the course of history. But no reader who is at all observant can fail to notice that this noble narrative is from time to time interrupted by passages in totally different character. The discord and confusion which result constitute one of the main problems of the Bible, and call for explanation. But here we must be content with a bare outline.

The great school of historical writers was founded perhaps as early as the reign of

Solomon, and endured until the age of Hezekiah. To that school we owe the greater part of Genesis, parts of Exodus and Numbers, most of Judges, about half of Joshua, nearly the whole of the two books of Samuel, and a considerable portion of the books of Kings. It is in their narrative that we read of Isaac blessing Jacob, of Joseph in Egypt, of Balaam and Balak, of Absalom's rebellion, of Elijah on Mount Carmel —in fact, all the stories which appeal to us by their naïveté, their deep human interest, their vivid pictures of character and manners, and their freedom from moralising. They are not always accurate; they do not clearly distinguish between fact and legend; but they are always true to human nature, and are priceless as records of human progress.

Just because they are so true to human nature, they show the early heroes of Israel guilty of many wrong acts, and quite ignorant of the theology and forms of worship which were orthodox in the later ages. On that account they were twice revised for the sake of edification. The company of priests and prophets who produced the book of Deuteronomy in the reign of Josiah, and made it the basis of a religious reformation, not only added that book to the early narratives, but inserted long passages in the other books, all of a didactic nature. Their object was to teach readers to take a religious view of the history of their people, by pointing out how Divine blessings and judgments had followed the observance

and the breach of the precepts laid down in Deuteronomy.

During and after the exile a completely new version of the Law was produced, adapted to the practice of later times. At the same time the whole of the early history was written in the form of an abstract, with numerous dates and genealogies, and omitting such incidents as made the heroes of old appear unorthodox. This abstract was once a separate book; but after a time it was united with the older books by a process of sandwiching. That is why we so often find two quite inconsistent accounts of the same event placed side by side. About the same time the new Law was inserted in the Pentateuch. It occupies the greater part of Exodus and Numbers, and the whole of Leviticus.

Later still, in the third century B.C., another history was composed. The author of the books of Chronicles gives a very brief abstract of the Pentateuch and Joshua, but quotes long passages verbatim from the books of Samuel and Kings, which he supplements with unhistorical narratives derived from priestly tradition.

By this time the productive period of Hebrew literature had come to an end. The scribe took the place of the prophet and the historian, and the sacred text was regarded in a new way. During the literary period each writer treated the work of his predecessors with great freedom, adding, adapting, and altering. But the scribe considered the whole text, as he received it, to be inviolable, and all parts of it to be of equal

value. Soon it was believed that all the Scriptures were literally "the Word of God," having been dictated to the various writers by the Spirit of God. The result was that "the background" came forward, and obscured the principal figures The Law became more prominent than the history, and counted for more than the prophets in the eyes of the ordinary Jews.

The same want of literary judgment injured the text of the prophetic writings. Fragments of prophecy, by unknown authors and of all degrees of merit, which were popularly ascribed to Isaiah and other great prophets, were interpolated in their genuine works with disastrous results.

This view of the Scriptures, with all its false perspective, was accepted as unquestionable by the first generation of Jewish Christians, who communicated it to the growing Church. In spite of occasional protests, this view was maintained by all branches of the Church until the nineteenth century; and sore has been the spiritual loss which it caused. For the free activity of the Divine Spirit, revealing truths gradually through the prophets, there was substituted a mechanical theory of dictation, only too acceptable to the unthinking multitude, which required that Christian teachers should exercise a disingenuous dexterity in "harmonising" the contradictions and inconsistencies in which the composite narratives abound.

In spite of such misconceptions the Old Testament has proved a possession of inestimable value to the Church. Most of its precious uses

are too obvious to need mention here: but one calls for special notice. The Hebrew Scriptures furnished the infant Church with a developed religious language, enabling all its readers to express their feelings and to understand each other with an ease which would otherwise have been inconceivable. It is not too much to say, with Professor Nairne, that—

> "The New Testament grew out of a Christian Church which was nourished and controlled by the Old Testament, and it is impossible to give any satisfactory account of the Christian faith without a knowledge of the Old Testament."

The New Testament came into existence in much the same way as the Old. St Paul and other Christian prophets wrote as the Spirit moved them to meet the needs of their disciples. They had not the least idea—they would have repudiated the suggestion — that they were writing Scripture. But some of their epistles were treasured by the recipients, and copied and circulated among the scattered communities, which found them, even more than the Old Testament Scriptures, "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."[1] A little later, when the apostles were almost all dead, and the hope of a speedy Advent was fading away, there was a demand for something like a history of the Lord's life and teaching The first to answer the call was St Mark, who (according to a very probable

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 16.

tradition) wrote out and arranged what he remembered of discourses which he had often heard when accompanying St Peter.[1] Within the next twenty years two fuller narratives appeared, each with a character of its own, but both based upon St Mark's Gospel and upon an early collection of the Lord's sayings which was current under the name of St Matthew.[2] The first Gospel appealed specially to Jews, laying great stress upon alleged fulfilments of prophecy. St Luke's Gospel, written by St Paul's physician and friend, is addressed rather to Greek readers. Both these authors, while they generally follow St Mark's order, and quote large portions of his narrative word for word, deal very freely with his text, correcting what they consider to be defects of style and errors of statement.

The fourth Gospel appeared a little later, probably in the first decade of the second century. Tradition connects it with the apostle St. John, who lived to a great age at Ephesus. This wonderful book, plainly the work of one familiar with the philosophy of Alexandrian Judaism, is thought with much probability to have been inspired by the conversation of the aged apostle, who supplied some of the incidents and sayings which give it a special character. The gifted author has not attempted to write a regular narrative like that of the Synoptic Gospels ; but in a series

[1] The date of its composition is probably A.D. 65–70.

[2] This collection is usually spoken of by scholars as "The Logian document," or Q. (short for the German word Quelle, which means source).

of dramatic scenes he has presented different aspects of our Lord's teaching and personality. The object of his idealised history is to show the significance of that Divine life for the whole of mankind. Christ appears in his pages as the Light of the world, the Life of the world, as incarnate Truth and Love; and He is all these because He is the Word made flesh. His passion is presented not as mere suffering, but rather as the revelation of His glory. His discourses, again, hardly touch the subjects which are His themes in the Synoptic Gospels. Instead of the kingdom of heaven, He speaks of His own Divine nature and the coming gifts of the Holy Spirit. In a word, what gives its peculiar character to the Fourth Gospel is the fact that it portrays not Jesus the Prophet and the Man of Sorrows, but Christ the Lord of Glory.

One other historical book remains to be named, which is only second in importance to the Gospels. In "the Acts of the Apostles" St Luke has given an illuminating record of the growth of the early Church, first in the Jewish and then in the larger Greek world. Except in the first five chapters, where he was dependent upon the rapidly growing traditions of the little Church in Jerusalem, his narrative is clear, dramatic, convincing, and evidently based on first-hand information—a model of memoir-writing.

Besides these first-rate authorities, there are a few small writings of late date and uncertain authorship. The pastoral epistles, written in St Paul's name, are important as showing how

the ministry was being organised at the end of the first century. The Epistle of Jude, the second Epistle of St Peter, and the second and third Epistles of St John, are late documents of secondary importance.

In the second century there were current a number of other "Gospels" and "Epistles," usually called apocryphal. Those that remain serve to prove how wise was the selection which the early Church made.

Gradually, by common consent and without any formal resolution, the books which make up our New Testament were recognised as Scripture. By the year 150 A.D. the process of selection was practically complete, though the books last named, as well as the Apocalypse, were not finally admitted to the Canon until near the end of the third century.

So there is truth in the claim that the Church made the New Testament and is prior to it. Yet such a claim gives a wrong impression. For a hundred years before the Canon was formed, St Paul's epistles had been a main influence in shaping the doctrine and organisation of the Church. Even before St Paul began to write those epistles, the main substance of St Mark's Gospel was being taught by St Peter, and was forming the minds of the earliest converts. And the idea of a Canon came, not from the Church, but from the Old Testament. Those, therefore, who claim for Church tradition an authority superior to that of the New Testament are doubly defying history. For they assume the

existence of an early organisation for which there is no evidence, and they neglect some of the main facts concerning the New Testament itself.

When once the Gospels and Epistles were recognised as Scripture, they were naturally invested with the same character of infallibility which was already attributed to the Old Testament. After the third century the voice of criticism was silent, and harmonisers were busy in proving that contradictions were really confirmations, and that St Paul, instead of growing in grace and knowledge, held exactly the same opinions from the moment of his conversion to his death. These conventional views have always done harm by obscuring a part of the truth, and have recently provoked a violent reaction, which is also harmful. But no conventions were ever able to quench the Spirit which lives in the pages of the apostles and evangelists. The Divine life and words of Jesus, the kindling eloquence of St Paul, the mystical charm of St John, the stately persuasiveness of the Epistle to the Hebrews, have such an influence on every candid reader that the corrupt priesthood of the Middle Ages could find no security for their own power except by making it a crime to possess a Bible. The Reformation, by proclaiming an open Bible, began a new era in the history of religion. For it gave to each man, as it were, a cell charged with electricity, from which he could at will draw light for guidance or force for moral action.

So it seemed. So it would have been but for two facts. The Reformers, steeped in the teaching of St Augustine, inherited the views of Scripture which were current in the fifth century; and these became stereotyped in the Protestant Churches. They ascribed to the New Testament writers an inerrancy which was claimed by none of them except the author of the Apocalypse, which is avowedly a work of imagination. And they neutralised the grant of an open Bible by denying an open interpretation. The comparative sterility of the Protestant Churches has been due to the fact that, in place of an infallible Church, each of them set up an infallible Book infallibly interpreted.

It is the task of our age to complete the Reformation by removing that obstacle to religious progress. The new criticism of the Bible, inspired by the advance of knowledge, scientific, historical and literary, is not an attack upon the sacred writers or their books, but only upon the wrong opinions about them which have been imposed by a long-established convention. In reality the new criticism brings us into closer and more intelligent sympathy with the apostles and evangelists, helping us to understand their points of view, their surroundings, their difficulties, and their triumphs. So their words cease to be a dead language, always in need of interpretation, and become a living tongue, which can communicate their spirit to us.

Is it possible to define in a few sentences the attitude of modern Christians to the Bible? I

am not sure; but it seems a duty to make the attempt.

First a word must be said about one aspect of revelation. We recognise the truth, which is stated in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that revelation has been gradual and partial. We see that this was necessary, since the prophets could never have obtained a hearing for new truths if they had not shared some of the errors and illusions of their contemporaries. We are not, therefore, surprised that Moses sanctioned polygamy, or that Isaiah accepted some principles which are now known to be untrue; nor shocked because St Paul did not condemn slavery, or protest against the Oriental view of women. There is a sense in which the Greek proverb which says, "The half is more than the whole,"[1] may be applied to revelation.

In the Old Testament, then, we find the record of God's revelation of Himself to a singularly gifted people, through the experiences of a tragic history, through the experiments of a gradually purified worship, but chiefly through the teaching of a long series of prophets. The whole is made real to us by the form in which it is conveyed. There is little of systematic exposition. We learn the truth bit by bit from the dramatic tales of national heroes and saints; from the vivid pictures of a progressive society; from the prophets' rebukes of sin and insistence upon the Divine attributes; from the mingled voices of the psalmists, where every tone may

[1] πλέον ἥμισυ παντός.

be heard, as well that of cruel self-righteousness as that of the purest devotion; from the revolt of Job against conventional theology, no less than the common-sense piety of Ecclesiasticus. We can watch generation after generation wrestling with the great problems of life, and trying to form adequate conceptions of God's nature and providence, of man's personality, of sin, of atonement, of the hopes for the future. We see how the partial answers to these great problems, which satisfy one generation, are found to be insufficient by the next; so that the religious history of Israel is that of an ascent by successive steps towards the truth. We see also how the religious literature of Israel ends, a hundred years before the birth of Christ, "in a row of unanswered questions."

In all this history we see our own experience writ large. Each of us, in so far as he is thoughtful and sincere, must wrestle with the same problems, and approach the solution only by stages. The teaching which we receive in youth may point us to the truth, but only personal experience and effort can enable us to make it our own.

The solutions of these great problems, the satisfaction of the yearnings which exercise us as they did the people of Israel, are found in the Christ who is portrayed in the New Testament. Putting aside conventions and controversies, let us try to describe what all reverent readers find in those wonderful pages.

First of all, we feel ourselves in the presence

of a personality so unique, so divinely good, so inspiring that we need not to be told in formal language that He is the revelation of the immanent Godhead. Instinctively we worship Him as such; and it is only by an afterthought that we try to define or explain His nature. In that attempt we are helped by the Synoptic writers and still more by St Paul and St John, who are all trying to find images by which they may express what they feel to be true. But after all, human language is inadequate, and all such attempts must fail in part. The Church was occupied for centuries in the effort to solve the problems of Christology; and the Athanasian Creed stands as a monument to warn men of the futility of trying to define the infinite.

Secondly, the recorded words of our Lord give us, not rules of conduct, but the principles of a higher life, which each generation must translate for itself into rules adapted to its own circumstances. The apostles help us by showing how the first generation of Christians tried to carry out those principles. Not all their rules are applicable now; but no historical changes can render obsolete the main body of their system.

Thirdly, we learn from the apostles, especially St Paul, that men may attain so far as to live in the consciousness of Christ's presence, possessed by His Spirit, trusting to the guidance which He gives.

Fourthly, in the recorded experience of that first generation we see the working of the New

Covenant. We learn from examples, more cogent than any exposition, what is meant by repentance, faith, atonement, sanctification, and the new life in Christ. We recognise in unmistakable portraits those fruits of the Spirit which we desire to see produced in ourselves.

Lastly, we understand that the Gospel is a principle of growth. That "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed" is true not only in respect of its external expansion, but also of its inward development. The meaning of the New Covenant is gradually unfolded in answer to the demands of a developing humanity.

NOTE.—Some readers will be glad to have a rough chronology of the books of the New Testament. The dates of St Paul's epistles have been fixed within narrow limits. As to the Gospels and non-Pauline epistles opinions vary widely. The dates which are given below may be taken as representing the views of many leading scholars.

	A.D.
1 and 2 Thessalonians	53
Galatians	51 or 55
1 Corinthians	56
2 Corinthians (1–9)	57
Romans	58
Philippians	62
Colossians	63
Philemon	63
Ephesians	63
Pastoral Epistles	(*circa*) 100

	A.D.
St Mark	65–70
St Matthew	75–90
St Luke	90–100
Acts	90–100
St John	100–110
1 Peter	65–70
Hebrews	80
Apocalypse	90–95
St James	100
1 John	100 110

2 Peter, Jude, 2 and 3 John probably belong to the first half of the second century.

CHAPTER VIII

MIRACLES

In the preceding chapter nothing has been said about one of the most difficult questions which can be raised in connexion with the Bible. It seemed better to show how much the Bible means to us independently of miracles, and then to discuss their place in revelation.

A miracle is often defined as an interference with the course of nature. Perhaps we should rather say that a miracle happens when some spiritual power produces a physical effect without the aid of the physical cause which is normally indispensable. Those who question narratives of such events are not necessarily denying the power of spirit to move matter. We all know that our own spirits move our bodies. And every theory of evolution implies a belief that the creative Spirit guides the processes of material change. He would be rash indeed, therefore, who should deny that God could intervene directly in the material world; and the *a priori* objection to miracles may, from the point of view of modern Churchmen, be disregarded. At the same time the whole tendency of modern science is to confirm that belief

in the uniformity of nature which raises a strong presumption against the accuracy of each record of a supposed miracle. Few people to-day would hesitate to admit that the evidence for a miracle must be very much stronger than what we require in the case of an ordinary event; and that full allowance must always be made for those tendencies to error which are known often to have created a belief in miracles.

One of these tendencies is gradually disappearing. In primitive ages, when men had no conception of natural law, they were ready to ascribe every strange event to the agency of spirits. Every advance in man's knowledge of natural laws has limited the sphere in which he can look for miracle.

Another is due to the inability of ordinary men to observe accurately what passes under their own eyes. Modern scientific tests have given unquestionable proofs of this. And it has long been known that when men come prepared to see something wonderful, they are very likely to deceive themselves.

Thirdly, in many ages of the world there has been a firm belief that "holy men" are sure to work miracles; and this belief has frequently caused natural events to be interpreted in a non-natural way.

When, therefore, we read narratives involving miracles, we are bound to ask how far these tendencies are likely to have been present in the narrator or his informants. Nor must we be misled by the plea that, when accounts of

miracles are found in a writer who is otherwise trustworthy, they must be accepted or else he must be discredited. Such an argument ignores psychology. For in an age which regards miracle as part of common experience, the most critical historians cannot resist the general tendency. Few early writers, for instance, are more sensible and reliable than the venerable Bede. For much of the early history of England he is excellent authority. And yet his narrative is strewn with tales of wonder which we unhesitatingly reject as merely childish.

A hundred years ago Christians felt bound to accept all the miracles related in the Bible without question. But by degrees, as their conception of inspiration became more spiritual, and their view of the world more scientific, they have learned to apply the three tests mentioned above to the miraculous narratives, first of the Old Testament and later of the New. Under these tests the miracles of the Old Testament may be said to have dissolved away. No educated Christian now believes that the sun stood still at Joshua's command, or that the iron swam when Elisha bade, or that Jehovah appeared in human form to Abraham. We all recognise, some more willingly than others, that the Old Testament stories of miracles are the natural product of popular imagination in a pre-scientific age, and that their inclusion detracts little from the historical value of the narrative as a whole.

The miracles of the New Testament belong to a different order. They are nearer to us in time; they are better attested; and they are, with few and unimportant exceptions, attributed to one unique person, who stands above ordinary human nature. Still we should show want of faith if we shrank from applying the recognised tests to these narratives also. We cannot expect to find any general agreement about the results of such an inquiry. But some important facts are beginning to be recognised.

A large number of the miracles ascribed to our Lord are cases of healing nervous disorders, many of which were then (and still are in the East) popularly attributed to possession by devils. Modern physicians are learning to cure some such diseases by psychological treatment. That He, whose powers of influence in every way were unique, should work such cures appears quite natural. The cases recorded are generally accepted as facts; but they are not miracles in the proper sense of the term.

A second but smaller class of miracles involves a supernatural control over matter. Such are walking on the sea, multiplying the loaves and fishes, causing the fig tree to wither, driving the swine into the sea. Of these narratives different men judge differently. Many believe that while some of them had their origin in parables, others are to be rejected as unworthy of Him who went about doing good. They point out that the multitude, who fully believed the cures to be miraculous, had not the means of

distinguishing between them and other works which really involved miracle.

In two instances[1] Jesus is reported to have restored the dead to life. Each narrative depends upon the unsupported testimony of one writer. The restoration of the widow's son[2] is not said to have led to any consequences. The raising of Lazarus[3] is said to have been described by the Pharisees merely as one of the "many signs." Many students feel that the evidence offered, and the importance attached to the incidents by the narrators, are too slight to carry conviction.

Two cardinal miracles stand by themselves. These are the miraculous birth of our Lord and the resurrection of His flesh. Of the latter we have spoken already.[4] As to the Virgin Birth it is urged that the evidence is not such as to compel belief. For the narratives in St Matthew and St Luke are barely reconcilable, while both include genealogies which have no meaning unless Joseph was the actual father of Jesus. St Paul was evidently not acquainted with the story when he wrote the opening verses of Romans, where the mention of it would have greatly strengthened his argument. The author of St John's Gospel was well acquainted with all the Synoptic Gospels, and he omits all refer-

[1] The case of the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue is often quoted as a third (Mark v. 35–43). But all three of the synoptists record that Jesus said, "She is *not* dead, but sleepeth."

[2] St Luke vii. 11. [3] St John xi. 1–44.

[4] See Chapter IV.

ence to this event. Can he have done so for any reason except that he did not believe it to be a fact?

It is impossible to prove a negative; it is not open to Christians to refuse belief on *a priori* grounds; and from very early times these miracles have been included in the creeds. Modern Churchmen, therefore, do not deny that these wonders happened. But they do claim that, in view of the nature of the evidence, men should not be regarded as heretics who decline to affirm them. For, if the conclusions of our first chapter be sound, belief in our Lord's Divine nature does not depend upon any material miracle. It rests securely upon moral and spiritual evidence which cannot be questioned—upon the wonder of His personality and upon the response which has been found in the lives of countless millions.

We often hear men argue that the wonders of His nature make it natural for us to expect material miracles from Him. That may be true. But we may not use *a priori* arguments—that is, arguments based upon the tendencies of our own minds—as a substitute for positive evidence. That is the same mistake as the Jews made, when they argued that He could not be the Christ, because they could not imagine a Christ who was crucified. Facts are none the less facts because our minds are unable to conceive them: nor does our power to conceive an event prove that it is likely to happen.

CHAPTER IX

THE CREEDS

Creeds were unknown in the ancient world, where religion followed nationality.[1] Every man, as a matter of course, did homage to the gods of his own people. Open denial of them would be punished (as in the case of Socrates) as high treason. But so long as a man conformed to custom he was not required to make any affirmation of belief. Among the Jews, in particular, there were radical differences of opinion: yet Pharisee and Sadducee, Herodian and Essene, all worshipped in the same temple, without any thought of excommunicating each other.

Had the Christians, as some of the apostles desired, remained a Jewish sect, they too could have dispensed with creeds. But a religion which overleaps the boundaries of race, and claims to be universal, cannot take the foundations of faith for granted, but must offer some formal statement of doctrine, intelligible to all, which may give definiteness to the faith of the individual, and serve as a bond to unite believers. This necessity was not perceived by the first

[1] Cujus regio, ejus religio.

generation of Christians. A development so new and so important as the creed required the aid of time and circumstance. Happily the records of the early Church, though they have sad gaps, enable us to trace the history of this development with tolerable certainty. A fascinating history it is, as told in such standard books as Swete's *Apostles' Creed.* In these pages, however, there is only space for a bare outline.

In the Acts and epistles we read of converts being baptised "into Christ," or "in the name of Christ Jesus," which means that they professed belief in Jesus as the Messiah. Before long something more was required of them. The last sentence of St Matthew's Gospel proves that when it was written (probably about 90 A.D.) Gentile converts were being baptised "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." That was natural, for Gentiles did not, like Jews, already believe in the Father. A little later it was found necessary to make sure that candidates for baptism did not hold strange opinions about the Son: *e.g.* that He was not truly man. Partly as a guide for the instruction of converts, partly as a security against the admission of the unfit, clauses were added to the baptismal formula; and each convert was required, at his baptism, to recite it. So the growing form of words came to be called "The Rule of Faith" (*regula fidei*). Early in the second century the Christians in Rome used the following "Rule" as their profession of faith.

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty;
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord
Who was born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary;
Crucified under Pontius Pilate, and buried;
The third day He rose from the dead,
He ascended into heaven,
Sitteth at the right hand of the Father.
Thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
And in the Holy Ghost,
The Holy Church,
The remission of sins,
The resurrection of the flesh."

Readers of this "Rule of Faith" cannot fail to notice its incompleteness as a statement of Christian beliefs. Nothing is here said of the goodness of God, or of His willing the good of man. Nothing of the nature of sin, of repentance, of atonement. The fact is that all through the early centuries Christians agreed about many of the main things; so these find no place in the creeds, which are chiefly a record of differences. We are tempted to ask whether we do well to go on reciting these old forms, when the centre of interest and of contention has moved beyond their scope.

So early as the first quarter of the second century, then, the Roman Church had built up some two-thirds of what we know as the Apostles' Creed. What other Churches were doing at the same time we can only infer; but from about 150 A.D. there are records of

many Rules of Faith used in various parts of the Roman empire, all very similar, but no two identical. We can see how they added new clauses as occasion arose. We can see, too, how the growing unity of the Church caused the various "Rules" to approach a common type, till at last (in the seventh century) all the Western empire accepted the Apostles' Creed in very nearly the same form which we use.

At the same time, and in the same way, the Nicene Creed was growing up among the Christians who spoke Greek. After much fierce disputing, an incomplete form of it was passed by the Council of Nicæa in 325 A.D., and set up as the standard of orthodoxy. By subsequent councils it was considerably enlarged, till the Council of Chalcedon (in 451 A.D.) accepted and promulgated it in very nearly its present shape.

Originally a baptismal confession, the Rule of Faith was naturally applied to other uses. Any Christian traveller, for instance, could produce the Rule of his own Church as a proof of his fitness to claim Communion with the Churches which he visited. So the Rule served as a test for orthodoxy both for individuals and for Churches. Gradually, as the Nicene Creed was imposed by Councils and the Apostles' Creed by general consent, the local Rules became obsolete, and then the same standard was acknowledged by all.

The use of the creeds which is most familiar to us—recitation in the daily services—was not introduced till very much later. The first

recorded instance belongs to the fifth century. The practice originated in the Eastern Church, and was gradually adopted in the West. The way was prepared by the use of the Te Deum, which was added to the list of canticles in the course of the fifth century. In substance the Te Deum is a creed, and it contains nearly all the statements which are found in the Apostles' Creed. But it is a creed cast in a form suitable for worship; for instead of merely affirming belief in certain facts, it gives God thanks for them. It would have been well if the Church had been content with this; for the introduction of the Apostles' or Nicene Creed, which is not a hymn of praise, but an affirmation of orthodoxy, sadly breaks the continuity of worship.

Late in the fifth century an unknown author wrote a new statement of belief, which was perhaps meant to be recited by the orthodox in the presence of Arian persecutors. Not till four hundred years later (892 A.D.) was the name "Creed" applied to the Athanasian profession of faith. About the same time it began to be recited regularly in the monasteries; but it has never been introduced into public worship by the Roman Church. The Anglican Church stands alone in this misuse of a document, whose subtleties and anathemas alike render it unsuitable for popular recitation.

The history of the creeds teaches us how modern Christians ought to regard them. They are not a "deposit"[1] given to be guarded, but a

[1] See 2 Tim. i. 14. "Guard the precious deposit" ("that

plant whose growth is to be fostered. So long as the Catholic Church was vigorous and intelligent, the creeds were continually being modified to suit new conditions of thought and life. What brought their development to an end was not a conviction that they were perfected, but the invasion of the barbarians, which reduced thought to impotence and life to a struggle against mere brutality. When light began to dawn again in the twelfth century, tradition was so firmly fixed, and the clergy so set against new ideas, that no one dared to raise any questions about these now venerable formulas. The Church having been finally divided between East and West, revision by a Council of the whole Church was impossible, and each branch of the Church shrank from making any change in that which was still a common possession and a link between them.

So the words of the two creeds remain unchanged to this day. Yet their meaning is not unchanged ; for forms of words, like material forms, wear different aspects when approached from different sides. For instance, some clauses in the Apostles' Creed, which were unquestionably believed by the early Church to be literal statements of fact, are now regarded by Churchmen of all schools as purely symbolical ; because modern knowledge has made their literal truth inconceivable to educated men. In other words, it is generally recognised that in each of these

good thing which was committed unto thee," R.V.). This is explained as "a pattern of sound words."

cases a spiritual truth was presented under the form of a material image adapted to the comprehension of the age which produced it; and that whereas the truth signified remains, the material image, grown obsolete, rather obscures than exhibits it. The clauses in question are as follows:—

"He descended into hell."

"He ascended into heaven."

"The resurrection of the flesh." ("Body" is a wrong translation introduced into our services for Mattins and Evensong. The right version remains in the Baptismal Service and the Visitation of the Sick.)

Of these clauses the first two have no literal meaning except for those (if any yet remain) who regard the earth as the fixed centre of creation, with a hollow space underneath for Hades and a solid vault overhead. The third contradicts the teaching of St Paul (see Chapter IV).[1]

In these four cases a change of interpretation has been generally accepted since Galileo narrowly escaped being burnt alive for saying that the earth moved round the sun. Are these the

[1] A fourth clause, "And sitteth at the right hand of God the Father," practically, though not strictly, belongs to the same category. Its literal meaning, which ascribes a human body to God the Father, was rejected by the few "instructed" Christians (*docti* or συνετώτεροι) of the third and fourth centuries, but we have the testimony of Origen and Augustine that it was firmly held by the great majority in their days (see Augustine's *Confessions*, III. 7, VI. 3 and 11; Origen's *Principia*, Preface § 9, and Book I., 1 § 7). So the change of interpretation in this case is almost as great as in the other three.

only clauses which may be or ought to be interpreted symbolically? The claim is being made in the case of two others—"Born of the Virgin Mary," and "He rose again[1] from the dead." As the grounds of the claim have been stated in previous chapters (IV. and VIII.) no more need be said here.

Similar questions arise about the corresponding clauses in the Nicene Creed. And there are others concerning the more elaborate Christology of that creed, which involve more issues than can be raised in these pages.

The ancient Church altered the language of the creeds from time to time, in order to meet the advance of religious thought. The modern Church has retained the words but altered their interpretation. Which is the better method? At first sight it would seem obvious that the procedure of the early Church was the right one. But when we read the history of the first six centuries, and see how much violence and intrigue and chicanery contributed to the decisions of Council, we may well doubt the possibility of attaining any satisfactory agreement by such means. Besides this, the language of the creeds, unchanged for fourteen centuries, is so remote from modern thought that no such minor changes as sufficed in days when change was frequent would meet our needs. And there is another difficulty. Each past century has left

[1] Though the words by themselves could be interpreted otherwise, they were undoubtedly meant to express "the resurrection of the flesh."

a deposit among us—a number of men who, though living to-day, belong by sympathy and modes of thought to the past. Whether they hold to the ideas of the fourth century or the thirteenth or the sixteenth, they are not less akin to us than the Christians who actually lived in those centuries. The creeds are a bond of union with them, which we may well shrink from severing. The same principle applies to the relation of our Church to other reformed Churches. They are moving on lines of thought converging towards ours; but it may be doubted whether they are yet near enough to unite with us in any restatement of our common faith.

That the need of such restatement is urgent is plain to most of us. The younger generation claim that it is imperative. Perhaps they have not yet learned from experience how impossible it is to produce formulas which are adequate. We who are older realise the hopelessness of trying to express the infinite in terms of the finite; and are therefore less confident than either modern youth or ancient Fathers in the wisdom of recasting old forms. Many of us prefer to enrich the old forms by reading into them the knowledge which is being gradually gained, without altering their outward form. That course, if openly followed, offers some advantages both to the individual and the Church. To the individual, because it secures stability combined with freedom. To the Church, because changes made by authority would tend

to create new heresies; and what the Church needs is not a fresh sifting by shibboleths, but a new comprehension of charity.

Yet such an attitude cannot, in the nature of things, be anything but transitory. The time must come, and that soon, when the Fathers of all the modern Churches will take up the task of formulation which was unhappily interrupted fourteen hundred years ago. Perhaps we may hope that a beginning will be made by the projected Conference on Faith and Order which is to meet ere long in the New World.

That splendid project, originated by the Churches of America, supported by those of the British Empire, and approved by representatives of the Greek Church, cannot be carried out except in a time of peace. Years may elapse before such a meeting is possible. Yet we may hope that the Great War, which delays that Conference, will also make its labours more fruitful. The furnace of affliction, through which the whole civilised world is now passing, cannot fail to burn up the dross of tradition, leaving the precious metal plain to view. Chastened, simplified, deepened in their lives, the Christians who meet at last will surely be far better able than before to recognise what are the essentials of their faith, and to agree upon new forms for its expression.

CHAPTER X

PRAYER

An adequate discussion of Prayer would fill a large volume. Here it is not proposed even to give an outline of such a discussion, but only to answer three of the most obvious and practical questions which arise in men's minds when they begin to reflect upon the subject. All of us, at some time or other, ask, Why should we pray? How should we pray? For what should we pray?

I. Why do we pray? Largely because we cannot help it. All men, in whom the religious instinct has not been atrophied, know in their serious moments that their finite spirits are related in some way to the Infinite Spirit, whom the material world half reveals and half conceals. Whether they think of Him as power, or justice, or love, as one or many, as personal or impersonal, they are impelled to draw near to Him for communion, for help, or for thanksgiving. The impulse is often unreasoning and sometimes unmoral; but it is as natural as the instinct which teaches the child to approach and to trust his father.

Another reason is the force of example. All

the great nations of the world have been praying nations. All the best men in history have been men of prayer.

A third reason is our own experience. However little we may be able to explain it, most of us know that prayer has often brought us help.

Those reasons, common to all mankind, prove prayer to be natural and reasonable. Christians have three further reasons, which make it a duty. These are the example, the precepts, and the instruction of their Lord. He spent whole nights in prayer; He taught that men ought always to pray and not to faint; and He gave His disciples a model form of prayer.

II. How ought we to pray? The Lord's Prayer supplies the answer to that question. Our prayers should be brief, simple, confident, and reverent. Our first thought should be of God's fatherhood, the second of His glory. Nor must we forget that the first word of the Lord's Prayer is not *My* but *Our*. Prayer is essentially social; for the Divine Father has not one son but many. Each may approach Him separately, but never without remembering his brothers. Each must join when he can with others; for it is mutual faith and sympathy that lend wings to our prayers.

The prayers of an individual are not always expressed in words. The uplifting of the heart, the abiding sense of God's presence, the consecration of effort to His service, are in the best sense prayers; for the essence of prayer is communion with the Divine.

When Christians unite for worship they may sometimes with advantage pray in silence. But for the most part one must speak for all, using either fixed forms or words of his own. There is much value in the occasional use of extempore prayer, which (like silent prayer) has been too little regarded in our own Church. Fixed forms, however, have best stood the test of experience. Men can join more heartily in prayers which are familiar, whereas they listen to extempore prayer much as they listen to a sermon. And familiarity need not produce a feeling of monotony; for time enriches each phrase with associations, personal or historical, which give them a special meaning for each worshipper.

Thus considered, the Anglican Prayer-book has no serious rival. Yet most thoughtful people feel that it needs a far-reaching revision. Its order is too rigid, its language too archaic, its scope too narrow. The last three centuries have made vast additions to our social and religious experience and aspirations, which demand recognition and expression in our corporate worship.

III. For what should we pray? What ought to be the substance of our prayers? To a large extent all Christians are agreed. All prayer, public or private, should contain the elements of confession, praise, thanksgiving, and aspiration. And in public worship these movements of the soul are stimulated by readings from the Bible and by occasional preaching. The point about which opinion varies, and practice even more

than opinion, is this: What are the objects for which it is right or allowable to make petition? We naturally refer to the Lord's Prayer as our model. It contains seven petitions. The first three are of a general character—for God's glory and the spiritual good of mankind. The last three are personal—asking forgiveness of our sins, and protection for our own spirits. The middle one alone asks for a material benefit: "Give us this day our daily bread." The proportion speaks for itself—six to one. And the material request is only for the bare necessities without which there could be no wholesome life and therefore no service. The principle exemplified in the Lord's Prayer is stated in a saying which tradition ascribes to our Lord:[1] "Ask for the great things, and the little things shall be added unto you: ask for heavenly things, and earthly things shall be added unto you."

It is true that the boundary between the material and the spiritual is not always clear to our eyes. In our own nature they are mysteriously interwoven, so that the state of the body influences the mood of the spirit, and the movements of the spirit react upon the body. But what if the granting of a prayer for calm and patience favourably affects the bodily health? Such a prayer asks for no miracle, and any physical benefit which results from calm of spirit follows according to the ordinary law of our nature. The physical result corresponds exactly to our words, "Ask for heavenly things, and

[1] See Origen's treatise on Prayer, chap. ii. § 2.

earthly things shall be added unto you." But what is commonly meant by "praying for recovery" belongs to a different order of ideas, for it involves a "miracle," *i.e.* God's direct action upon matter.

The conclusion that material benefits are not proper objects of prayer is supported by two reasons which appeal more to the modern than to the ancient mind. One is the reign of law. That means, not that God is bound by laws, but that, so far as our knowledge goes, He governs the material world according to fixed principles, which do not admit of exception. Therefore to pray for rain or the sudden removal of a plague is to ask God to be inconsistent with Himself.

The second reason is a moral one. The supply of material good things at any given moment is limited: so that what is given to one must be denied to another. Even if the first reason did not forbid a boy to pray that he may win a race, the second reason would exclude such a prayer as immoral. Competitive prayers can only be justified by assuming the existence of many gods, who act independently. Athena in the *Iliad* answers the prayer of Ulysses, and helps him to win the race.[1] It was not unfair, for other gods might have helped his rival. The practical polytheism of the Middle Ages, when men and nations had their patron saints, sanctioned the continuance of such heathen prayers. But no one who believes in one God, the Father of all men, can consistently pray for a benefit

[1] *Iliad*, xxiii. 763–779.

which must be granted at a brother man's expense.

Yet during the Great War most of us were praying earnestly for victory. Is that wrong? It depends upon the spirit in which we make the prayer; whether, that is, our central thought is God's will or our own gain. If we mean merely, "Give the prize to us and not to our enemies," we are in the wrong. If we mean, "We know that our cause is Thine, for it is righteous; and we pray Thee to let the right prevail," we have a warrant for our prayer; for it is another way of saying, "Thy will be done."

Yet one condition must be added. Even the prayer "Thy will be done" would be without warrant if it covertly asked for a miracle. The objects of prayer are "the great things," "the heavenly things"; that is, the proper sphere of prayer is the spiritual. Prayers for spiritual gifts (such as wisdom, courage, patience, or self-sacrifice), contravene no law, for faith and experience teach us that, in some way which we cannot analyse, the Spirit of God does move the spirit of man. And such prayers are not competitive, for there is no limit to the supply of spiritual boons, and the gain of each man enriches his neighbours as well as himself.

How are such prayers answered? Our Lord, who spoke so strongly about the power of prayer, did not promise that all requests would be granted. Men often desire what is not for their good. That is one meaning of the words, "What man is there of you, whom if his son ask

bread, will he give him a stone?" Even in the spiritual sphere our prayers often fail to obey the rule, "Ask for the great things." We tend to fix our thoughts upon the means instead of the end, and make mistakes in our choice of means. To grant such mistaken requests would be like giving a stone for bread. But God knows our true intent, and answers accordingly.

How do we know that He does answer such prayers? We cannot appeal to visible results, as in the case of material benefits. The appeal must be to experience—the experience of the Saints in all ages, and of whole communities in some times of crisis. They affirm without hesitation that God has heard and answered their prayers: and their assurance finds an echo in our hearts.

CHAPTER XI

THE SACRAMENTS

Mysteries.—Our word "sacrament" is derived from the Latin *sacramentum*, which was used by the Western Church to translate the Greek word *mystery* (μυστήριον). Only three times is the original term used in our Prayer-book. But the sentence in the Communion Service, "He hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries," points us back to the other mysteries from which these were distinguished as "holy."

For several centuries before Christ the mysteries were the effective part of Greek popular religion. Since they were kept secret (as the name implies) we have only a general knowledge of their character. But we do know that certain features were common to most of the numerous mystery religions. These are:

(1) A ceremony of initiation; usually a formal washing which symbolised the removal of sin.

(2) A sacred meal, of which only the initiated might partake. In the mysteries of Mithras, the meal consisted of bread and water.

(3) A dramatic representation of some incident in the life of the god.

(4) A belief in a future life, in which virtue was to be rewarded and vice punished.

The heathen mysteries, like the Jewish sacrifices, gave an imperfect satisfaction to man's yearning for communion with God. Like the sacrifices, too, they were "baptised into Christ," and contributed something to the forms of Christian worship. In both cases the contribution was indirect. As the Jewish converts, whose minds were saturated with ideas of sacrifice, imported the language of sacrifice; so the Greek converts, familiar with the mysteries, influenced the forms of purification, of initiation, and of communion. How familiar the early Greek Christians were with the mysteries we may infer from the Epistles to the Corinthians, in which St Paul uses a number of technical terms, without thinking it necessary to give any explanation. He did not, however, apply the term "mystery" either to baptism or to the Lord's Supper. So far as I know, that use does not occur in any Christian writer before the third century.

There was good reason for hesitating to adopt the term. For the heathen mysteries had their roots in ancient magic, and never got clear of its influence. Heathen baptism and other ceremonies were supposed to produce their proper effects without regard to the state of mind of the person on whom they acted. The Christian sacraments, on the contrary, were so ordered as to satisfy that human desire for communion, to which the heathen mysteries appealed, and yet to remain pure from the taint of magic. Unhappily this purity was not maintained. When large numbers of imperfectly instructed

heathen were admitted into the Church, they not only imported the name "mystery," but also a considerable element of its magical associations; and these affected the doctrine and practice of the whole Church down to the Reformation.

When heathen mysteries were a thing of the past, the term was applied in a vague sense to several Christian institutions. Some of the later Greek Fathers (of the fourth and fifth centuries) recognised seven "mysteries": Baptism, the Lord's Supper, Confirmation, Penance, Matrimony, Ordination, and the Unction of the Sick. The Roman Church calls all these by the name of Sacrament. But Baptism and the Eucharist are distinguished from the rest by three marks—

(1) Our Lord's own appointment.

(2) The analogy of the ancient mysteries.

(3) The use of a material symbol.

The Church of England seems to have done wisely in restricting the use of the name "Sacrament" to these two alone.

Baptism.—Baptism was an old Jewish ceremony for the admission of proselytes. It was an apt symbol of the purification of heart which was required of them. As such our Lord adopted it, so that His disciples baptised all who wished to rank among His followers. For many years none but adults were baptised; and St Paul always takes that rule for granted. He regards baptism as the seal set upon repentance and faith; and that is why he describes the baptised as "buried with Christ" and rising again

with Him into new life.[1] What such baptism meant we can best understand through the experience of those who are confirmed in "years of discretion." We know how, in many cases, the instructions, the aspirations, the growing faith of months or years, are crystallised in an hour of blessing. Such an experience is a true sacrament, the reception of spiritual grace through the aid of a symbol. But unfortunately St Paul, not foreseeing either the custom of infant baptism or the modern criticism of his words, was not careful to distinguish the symbol from the faith which made it effective. He used language which, when unthinkingly transferred to the baptism of infants, lent itself to a magical conception. Since the infant can neither repent nor believe, the new life, which in his view was the fruit of conscious repentance and faith, came to be regarded as the result of the mere ceremony of baptism. And when the question arose, "From what sin is the unconscious infant cleansed?" an answer was found in a theory of "original sin" which a perverse logic deduced from some of the apostle's words.

There is great need, therefore, to reaffirm the doctrine of the New Testament, which demands conscious repentance and faith as conditions of the new birth. That infants should be received into the Church by baptism is a natural and beautiful custom. They are thus placed in a position of privilege; but there is no authority in the New Testament for believing that any

[1] Rom. vi. 3, 4, and Col. ii. 12.

change is thereby effected in their nature. Such change is not to be looked for until the essential conditions of repentance and faith have been fulfilled.[1] The Western Church, by deferring the laying on of hands (which was from the first an essential part of baptism) till "years of discretion," has provided a formal occasion for such a change. Confirmation is historically the equivalent of adult baptism; but the mistaken view of infant baptism, to which reference has been made, led men to underestimate its importance. The result was a general neglect of the rite in England from which recovery is difficult.

Holy Communion.—For our knowledge of the way in which the first generation of Christians understood the Lord's Supper we depend entirely upon two passages in one of St Paul's epistles,[2] written almost thirty years after the Crucifixion. Since his object is to correct abuses at Corinth, he has no occasion to make a complete statement; but incidentally he recognises

[1] How completely it was taken for granted that only adults would be baptised is shown by these words of Justin Martyr, written about 147 A.D. "As many as are persuaded and believe that the things taught and said by us are true, and moreover take upon them to live accordingly, are taught to pray and ask of God with fasting for forgiveness of their former sins, we praying and fasting together with them. Then they are brought by us to a place of water, and there regenerated after the same manner as ourselves; for they are washed in the name of God the Father and Lord of all, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ."—*Apology*, i. 79.

[2] 1 Cor. x. 14–21; xi. 17–34.

three cardinal principles, which the Church has always accepted. These are the principles of representation, of communion with Christ, and of communion with one another.

(A) "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye represent[1] the Lord's death till He come." The communicants sat round a table, at the head of which was a "president," who repeated the Lord's words by way of consecrating the bread and wine. Already, when Paul wrote, the Lord's Supper was a conscious acting over the Last Supper; and so it has always remained. The celebrant who represents the Lord, and the communicants who act the part of the apostles, whether they sit or kneel, whether in a bare room or a splendid cathedral, are re-enacting the original scene in an upper room at Jerusalem. They are dramatically reminding themselves and the world of the Lord's death. And they are thereby renewing that New Covenant, which on man's side is ever in need of renewal.

(B) "The cup of blessing, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? . . . Ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord and of the table of devils."[2] These two sentences present communion with Christ under two different aspects. The former shows the worshippers symbolically partaking of the covenant sacrifice, just as the apostles did at the Last Supper. The latter implies that the risen Christ is invisibly present

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 26.
[2] 1 Cor. x. 16, 21.

at the Agapè, sharing the elements with the communicants, who are guests at His table. Here there is distinct reference to heathen custom. An ancient papyrus runs thus: "Chairemon invites you to dinner at the table of the Lord Serapis, in the Serapæum to-morrow." The words plainly mean that Serapis (whom St Paul calls "a devil") invisibly presides at the sacrificial feast.

Are these two aspects consistent with one another? Yes; but only if the Lord's Supper is regarded as an acting over of the Last Supper, the bread and wine being symbols, and not in any way transformed.

(C) "We, who are many, are one loaf, one body: for we all partake of one loaf."[1] Sharing a common meal is the immemorial symbol of kinship. Even the wild Arab regards the man who has "eaten his salt" as a brother for the day. So the custom of sharing the consecrated bread and wine creates an adoptive kinship between all communicants, independent of time and place. It unites Christians of all ages and all nations in one brotherhood.

Unhappily each of these three principles may be, and has been, so perverted as to lend itself to a magical conception of the Eucharist.

(A) Our "representing the Lord's death," because of its dramatic form, has been understood to be the same thing as repeating it—that is, as offering the sacrifice over again. The error was promoted by the misinterpretation,

[1] 1 Cor. x. 17. The R.V. "bread" is misleading.

so natural to the ignorant, of the sentence "This is my body," as if it were a literal statement. As early as the second century we find the beginnings of the notion that the priest's words had power to transform the bread and wine. From this double error, essentially magical, was developed the Roman doctrine of the mass, whose influence has been so disastrous.

(B) The spiritual communion described by St Paul is degraded into the magical when the priest is supposed to be able to change the elements into the actual body of Christ. The common people in the Middle Ages actually revived the old phrase, "eating the God," which belonged to the magical sacrifices of antiquity.

(C) The beautiful conception of the Church as a brotherhood, the body of Christ, bound together by communion, was corrupted by a mechanical interpretation, which made it exclusive. The mediæval motto *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* receives a lurid commentary in Dante's great poem. He describes without protest how in Limbo, a region of Hell, he found all the noblest of the ancients, condemned to spend eternity in exclusion from the presence of God.

A natural reaction against the mediæval magic, which made a fetish of bread and exposed it for worship, led in the sixteenth century to the cold commemoration of Zwingli. But the modern religious soul cannot find rest in either of these opposites. For experience teaches that something does happen in the Eucharist. A real change is effected, not in the material elements,

but in the soul of the worshipper. Let us try to trace his experience in outline.

Whoso takes part in that sacred drama finds himself carried away by it. As the action proceeds his soul is uplifted, his faith enhanced: he feels that which at other times he merely understands—the beauty, the glory, the joy of sacrifice. He desires to claim these for himself, in spite of pain. And feeding at the Lord's table he is conscious of a renewed union with Him, which lends him the needed powers. His personality is at once enlarged and absorbed. Just because he feels Christ to be in him, and himself in Christ, self loses its limitations and is merged, without loss of individuality, in the Infinite. Nor does he forget that others enjoy the same experience. His fellow worshippers too are "in Christ"; and their enhanced personalities come into a real communion with his own. So he realises something of what is meant by the prayer "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."[1] A soul thus expanded, freed (if but for a moment) from the limitations of common life, conscious of infinite possibilities, feels a gratitude which demands expression. And so every true worshipper joins enthusiastically in the hymn of praise and thanksgiving, so moving and elevating, which has come down from the long past, enriched by the associations of ages. That is why the whole sacramental office is rightly named "the Thanksgiving"—the Eucharist.

[1] St John xvii. 21.

CHAPTER XII

CHRISTIAN ETHICS

MEN often speak as if the moral atmosphere of the world into which Jesus was born had been a vacuum, which He filled by promulgating a complete code of moral rules. Count Tolstoi, for example, starting from this unhistorical assumption, and trusting to a crude logic unmitigated by common sense, arrived at the conclusion that Jesus was a pacificist, an anarchist, the enemy of property and police, and of most of those institutions which make civilised society possible. Yet there is one well-attested saying of our Lord which is sufficient by itself to discredit all such conclusions. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law: I am come not to destroy but to develop."[1] In other words, He accepted the existing social order as a whole, and desired His followers to do so likewise; but desired to amend what was faulty therein and to develop what was good. A moment's consideration will convince us that any other course would have implied a denial

[1] The Greek word πληρῶσαι has no exact equivalent in English: but "fulfil" (R.V.) is hopelessly wrong. The meaning is "to bring to completion," or "to fill up what is lacking." The nearest single word is "develop."

of God's providence. To condemn the whole social order, painfully built up by the prophets and leaders of mankind, as only fit for the scrap-heap, would be to confess that human progress had no sanction from the Creator, and owed nothing to the guidance of His Spirit. But Jesus shared that reverence for the achievements of the past which is characteristic of all great reformers. This is manifest not only in His respectful references to Moses, but also in the entire absence of criticism upon the cardinal institutions of Jewish society—the family, private property, the hierarchy, civil law, and taxation. These, as well as other institutions, were destined to be profoundly affected by His teaching, but gradually and in the way of development. In the same way He accepted the decalogue and other rules of personal conduct, not abrogating them, but developing the principles which underlay them.

How is it, then, that the Lord's teaching effected such a vast change in the standards of human conduct, both personal and social? We may answer briefly thus—

1. By revealing the Fatherhood of God He gave mankind a new conception of the Divine nature, which gradually changed their conception of human duty.

2. Accepting, as a whole, the rules of moral conduct which the Jews recognised to be binding, but found so hard to follow, He added a new motive for obeying them, and a new method of applying their principles.

3. The new motive was the love of man as the child of God. It is difficult to exaggerate the change which this has gradually effected.

4. The new method may be described under three heads—

(*a*) Hitherto moral rules had been negative. The Jews were not the only nation in whose code almost every sentence began with "Thou shalt not." Jesus, at one stroke, made the moral ideal positive. "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you."

(*b*) Hitherto morality had been concerned with acts only. Jesus taught that character is the spring of action, and thoughts the test of character. Men are judged not only by their acts, but by their words and thoughts.

(*c*) When Jesus said, "The Sabbath is made for man," He laid down a new principle by which all institutions and laws are to be judged. They are good or bad, as they promote or hinder the good of men.

5. Jesus set before men a new ideal, the realisation of the Kingdom of God: that is, a new social order in which God's will, the law of love, would be fully obeyed.

6. Laying down no laws, but giving a motive, a method, and an ideal, He initiated a process of moral development, gradual and unceasing, which is best described in His own words: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a

woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."[1]

When the Christian society spread into Western Asia and Eastern Europe, coming into close contact with Greek and Roman civilisation, the disciples followed the example of their Master in accepting that civilisation as a law which was not to be destroyed, but developed. So Roman law and Greek philosophy, the best things of their kind which the world had yet seen, became contributory to the growing conception of a world-wide Christianity. It might have seemed impossible that one Church should absorb and unify elements so diverse as the ideals of Israel, of Greece, and of Rome. The Hebrew ideal was ecclesiastical, the attainment of righteousness by obedience to a Divine law. The Roman ideal was social and political, justice and order in a strong state. The Greek ideal was individual, the harmonious development of each man in freedom. These three principles had clashed wherever they met. What miracle could harmonise them? Only the all-embracing power of the Love which Jesus made the motive of action.

How can this be? In order to understand the operation of Christian Love we must take note of its characteristics. Love is not a mere sentiment, but is expressed in action. It is not self-regarding, but seeks the good of others. It is not only individual, but social, and aims at the benefit of the community. Therefore it is not opposed to justice, but co-operates with it. Love

[1] St Matt. xiii. 33.

can be stern as well as gentle, for it demands the repression of wrong and the protection of the weak. Lastly, Christian Love is not blind, but is guided by reason. It is far removed from that unintelligent enthusiasm for good which often does more harm to a community than intelligent selfishness.

Ideally, therefore (and it is the ideal we have to consider just now), Christian Love satisfies the Jew's desire for righteousness; for, as St Paul says, "Love is the fulfilment of the law."

Equally does Christian Love satisfy the Roman's demand for social righteousness. For it makes each man a good citizen, both negatively and positively. It makes him refrain from breaking the law himself, and it makes him insist, for the sake of others, upon a strict repression of lawlessness.

Christian Love, because it is intelligent, goes a long way with the Greek desire for self-realisation. For it bids each man not to hide his talent in a napkin, but develop it for the service of his fellows.

We are speaking of the ideal. We are all aware that at no period in her history has the Church been wholly animated by the principle of Christian Love. But every age has produced many individual lives in which its power has been almost perfectly shown forth. It is by these that the power of the principle must be judged.[1]

[1] The influence of Christian love upon social action will be considered in the next chapter.

The Law of Love, then, harmonised, reinforced, and spiritualised the ethical system of antiquity. But that is not all. There remain five aspects of its operation to be considered.

I. The Law of Love altered the scale of moral values. The ancient world was very hard upon such sins of passion as are manifestly inconvenient to society, but very tolerant of the selfishness, pride, cruelty and rapacity, which are more elusive and are often found in the "respectable." The Prophet who pardoned the "woman who was a sinner," and denounced the Pharisees, set up a new standard for His Church. The Church, however, has in a large measure adhered to the Pharisaic ideals of orthodoxy and respectability.

II. From the truth of Divine immanence, of which His life was the demonstration, it follows that every human soul has an incalculable value (see page 7). This truth He expressed by saying that God is the Father of all men, and all men are brothers. He brought it home to men by behaving in such a way as to show that He saw possibilities of good in all men; so that He was called "the friend of publicans and sinners."

III. From the brotherhood of man follows the duty of humility, that characteristic but often misrepresented Christian virtue. It does not consist in an ungrateful depreciation of the gifts with which God has endowed us. The man who is truly humble so fully recognises the brotherhood of men that he regards his own talents or advantages, not as a ground for

claiming privilege or power, but as imperative reasons for doing service to those who have need.

IV. So we come to the point in which the moral teaching of Christ differs most profoundly from that of Greece, or Rome, or Israel. "The sinner[1] whom Christ habitually denounces is he who has done nothing. This character comes repeatedly forward in His parables. It is the priest and the Levite who passed by on the other side. It is Dives, of whom no ill is recorded except that a beggar lay at his gate full of sores, and yet no man gave unto him. It is the servant who hid in a napkin the talent committed to him." And in the vision of the last judgment, while nothing is said of ordinary sinners, misled by passion, attention is concentrated upon those who offend against the new Christian law of active benevolence. The sentence pronounced upon them gives only one reason for their condemnation: "Inasmuch as ye did it not." Again and again this principle has been forgotten by the Church at large, which has often degraded religion into a selfish care for personal salvation, and a sentimental expression of goodwill to men, passive and sterile. But the words of Jesus remain to bear witness against all such relapses.

V. A danger which besets all moral systems is that of being stereotyped. It is so natural to interpret principles in the form of rules; and yet unforeseen changes of circumstance are constantly rendering rules obsolete. Jesus stands alone among the founders of new systems in

[1] J. R. Seeley—*Ecce Homo*, chap. xvi.

having given no rules but only a motive, principles, and ideal.[1] When He proclaimed the kingdom of heaven as something to be attained in the future, He implicitly ordained that Christian ethics should be not static but dynamic. Doubtless the natural tendency of men to petrify institutions has often prevailed; but no one who compares the moral standards of Christian countries in the fourth, the sixteenth, and the twentieth centuries, can fail to see how largely rules have been changed in order that principles may be maintained, and how the motive power which effected reforms has been devotion to an ideal for the future, guiding the force of love in the present.

This is not the place for an account of the application of Christian ethics to particular problems. The object of this chapter is simply to describe the distinctive characteristics of the system as a whole—its motive, its method, its insistence on action, its independence of tradition, and its fixity of purpose. All this is summed up in one prophetic sentence of St Paul: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith working by love" (Gal. v. 6).

[1] The apparent exceptions, more often quoted than understood, are a group of sayings in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 38–42). They are all of the same character—pathetic over-statements, admirably suited to catch the ear of the people, but plainly not intended for literal observance. "Give to him that asketh thee," for instance, even when partially practised in a modern society, always demoralises the whole neighbourhood.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

An anonymous writer of the second century, when the Christians were a numerous and increasing body, but unpopular and often persecuted, described their position in the following terms:—

"What the soul is to the body, Christians are in the world. The soul is spread through all the members of the body; so are the Christians through all the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body, and yet is not of the body; so Christians dwell in the world, and yet they are not of the world. . . . They spend their existence upon earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the established laws, but in their own lives they surpass the laws."[1]

This passage may stand as an ideal description of the Church until the reign of Constantine. She held aloof from the world, and yet was meditating the conquest of the world. Her aloofness was a source of strength; for none would join her ranks who were not prepared to make sacrifices for their faith. Accordingly the feeling of brotherhood was very strong among

[1] *Epistle to Diognetus*, chap. v.

them, and the moral standard high. A great change came in the fourth and fifth centuries, when the profession of Christian faith became first fashionable and then compulsory throughout the civilised world. The Church having conquered the world paid the usual price of conquest by amalgamating with the vanquished and accepting a great part of their culture.[1] No longer sifted by persecution and stimulated by isolation, she lowered her moral standard, not in theory but in practice, and accepted the Roman social order, with its plutocracy, slavery, and gladiatorial shows. There was a brief space when the "soul of the world" might have controlled the body; when a united Church with a social ideal might have effected far-reaching reforms. That opportunity lost, the elements in the state were so mixed that the Church had no longer a separate consciousness. Individual Christians were often influential, but Christians could take no collective action, because they were merged in "the world." If reformers used the name of Christ, so did those who opposed reform. Ere long the word "Church" changed its meaning and denoted the priesthood as opposed to the laity. That was a momentous change, whose effects are not even yet exhausted.

In our day, however, there is a return to something like the old contrast between the Church and the World. A variety of causes, operating through the last hundred and fifty

[1] "Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit, et artes
Intulit agresti Latio."—Horace, *Epp.* I. i. 156.

years, have produced in all European countries a state of things not unlike that of the third century. It is no longer assumed that all citizens belong to the Church; for a large proportion of them are either indifferent or openly hostile to all forms of Christianity. The problems to which this change gives rise are many. Let us confine our thoughts to two or three of them as they affect the Church in England.

The Christians of the twentieth century, like those of the second, find themselves opposed by a large part of their fellow-citizens. How do they regard their position? Do they consider themselves "the soul of the world" predestined to conquer it, and meanwhile able to exert a great influence over it? Unhappily they lack the unity which gave strength and hope to the Church of the second century. The Christians in England are divided into a score of sects, who waste upon fruitless disputations and rival organisations the energies which, if concentrated upon promoting the kingdom of God, would be irresistible. Until the Christian Churches are united, in spirit if not in form, they cannot regard themselves hopefully as "the soul of the world." And unity can only be attained by returning to the custom of the primitive Church, which gave the first place to character and conduct, and the second to doctrine.

Let us suppose this to be so far accomplished in England that we may speak of the Church in the large sense of "the blessed company of all faithful people;" and go on to consider two

questions which have to be faced. What is the duty of the Church in relation to (1) the internal and (2) the external policy of the State?

I. From time to time there arise great social questions which involve principles fundamental to Christianity. Such were the abolition of the slave trade and the Factory Acts; such are now national education and the regulation of the drink traffic; such will be various other questions which already appear above the horizon. Hitherto the Church has had no policy. Lord Shaftesbury complained that some of his bitterest opponents were Churchmen; and we see the divisions of Church opinion to-day with regard to remedies for drunkenness. The time may perhaps come when Christian opinion will be united, not only as to the ends to be attained, but also as to the means; and when there is some representative body which can speak for the whole. For many years that is out of the question. The first step has yet to be taken. Some method has to be discovered by which Christian opinion and influence can be united for the purpose of demanding urgent social reforms without trying to decide what are the best means of carrying them out.

II. Christians are not only citizens of a state, in which they desire to advance the kingdom of God; they are responsible, in proportion to their power, for the part which their State acts in the great world of nations. What attitude does the Christian citizen take towards the external policy of his State? He desires that the Government

who represent him shall deal fairly with other States, whether large or small, never trying to gain an advantage by force, or fraud, or threatening. Nothing can be more abhorrent to him than the famous formula of German professors, which asserts that while the law of Christ ought to rule our private life, the conduct of State affairs must follow the principles of Machiavelli. Neither will he permit those principles to triumph, if adopted by a foreign Government towards his own. Since he is consciously his brother's keeper, he does not feel it right that his Government should suffer the lives or the higher interests of his fellow-citizens to be destroyed by foreign aggression. So the collective will and vote of the mass of Christian citizens ought unequivocably to demand that their representatives should act with the same fairness and firmness which any one of them would show in his dealings on behalf of private friends. Therefore they recognise the lawfulness of war in a righteous cause, and the duty of serving in such wars. They recognise, too, the duty of national preparedness; for no one who has lived through the Great War can doubt that for a nation to be unprepared is to invite aggression. At the same time the Church (in the inclusive sense) has a tremendous responsibility for the preservation of peace. Transcending nationality, the Church ought to be the great reconciler of nations. But she cannot unite others unless she is at unity with herself; and hitherto divisions in the Church, corresponding with national distinctions,

have often embittered strife, and sometimes caused it.

III. There is a third sense in which the Church is definitely related to the World. The last sentence of St Matthew's Gospel shows that before the end of the first century Christians reckoned it a duty to preach to "all nations." For several centuries missionary work was carried on with enthusiasm. Though during the dark ages in Europe, and again during the religious wars which followed the Reformation, missions fell into abeyance, on the whole there was progress, and as geographical discovery widened the horizon the activity of the Church increased. The Roman Church has a long and splendid record of devoted service. The Reformed Churches, absorbed in their early struggles, did not begin to send missionaries till late in the seventeenth century; and not till the nineteenth did missions obtain serious recognition in England. Now, happily, they are a prominent feature in the life of all the Churches. How great a blessing they may bring is proved by the transformation of Uganda during the twenty years of Bishop Tucker's episcopate.

Until recently the missions of different Churches did not come much into contact with each other. There was such a vast area of heathendom that each mission could choose a fresh field of work. But now their expansion, which has brought them into contact, and sometimes into conflict, raises in an acute form the same problems which we have failed to solve at

home. In England our divisions have a history which explains if it cannot justify them. But to evangelise Central Africa by preaching a divided Christianity is an intolerable scandal and absurdity. Were the matter left to the missionaries themselves, they would generally, as the Kikuyu conference indicates, soon arrive at a brotherly understanding. But unhappily their hands are tied by the intolerance of some of their supporters in England; and even in the mission field there are a few fanatics who do not scruple to speak of "converting" a newly baptized African from presbyterianism to episcopacy. It is to be hoped that the "Kikuyu[1] Controversy," which has lowered the Church so much in the estimation of thinking men, may do good in the end by making all Churchmen realise how sinful is the sectarian spirit of which it is the symptom. One thing is certain. Until the Reformed Churches unite in a brotherly concord they cannot succeed in bringing peace to the heathen.

For their sake, for our own sake, and for the sake of all humanity, we have need daily to echo the prayer of the Great High Priest:[2] "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

[1] This raged in the early part of 1914. [2] St John xvii. 20, 21.

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